



**Imogen Herrad**

**The Rewards of Dependency and  
the Cost of Revolt: Sparta and the  
Perioikic Poleis**

# The Rewards of Dependency and the Cost of Revolt: Sparta and the Perioikic Poleis

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## Introduction

The people we call ‘the Spartans’ were referred to, more correctly, as ‘the Lakedaimonians’ by the ancients (including by ‘the Spartans’ themselves). Their state was composed of a number of different groups: at the top were the Spartiates (Σπαρτιᾶται, *Spartiâtai*), i.e. the citizens of Sparta, which was by far the largest and most powerful, but not the only polis in Laconia. I use the terms ‘Spartans’ or ‘Spartiates’ to refer to the citizens of the city of Sparta. Only they had rights and access to political participation. The citizens of the state of Lakedaimon were the Lakedaimonians, and this designation very much included not only the Spartiates, but also the people who inhabited the thirty or so other, much smaller, towns that were dotted about its vast territory (see map 1). These ‘other Lakedaimonians’<sup>1</sup> are usually collectively referred to in our sources (and by modern scholars) as περίοικοι, *períoikoi*, a term that literally translates as, ‘those who dwell around’.<sup>2</sup> They, rather than the Spartiates, are the subject of this essay.

Spartiates and (elite) perioikoi were fellow, if unequal, citizens: they fought side by side, worshipped the same gods and shared the same conservative values; but at the same time, the perioikoi were second-class citizens.<sup>3</sup> So it may seem surprising that unlike the ‘subject allies’ in the

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<sup>1</sup> This is the phrase put into the mouth of Damaratos, the exiled king of the Lakedaimonians, by Herodotos: οἱ γὰρ μὲν ἄλλοι Λακεδαιμόνιοι, Herodotos 7.234.2.

<sup>2</sup> For the wider use of the term in the sources see the discussion in Fritz Gschnitzer, *Abhängige Orte im griechischen Altertum*, Zetemata 17 (Munich: Beck, 1958): 149–50.

<sup>3</sup> *Contra* Ryszard Kulesza, “Citizenship and the Spartan Kosmos,” in *Citizenship in Antiquity: Civic Communities in the Ancient Mediterranean*, ed. Jakub Filonik, Christine Plastow and Rachel Zelnick-Abramovitz (London: Routledge, 2023): 209–12 in 209–25.



**Map 1:** Roads in Laconia. Map by Jacqueline Christien, taken from her article “Roads and Quarries in Laconia,” trans. Christopher Annandale and Anton Powell, in *A Companion to Sparta*, vol. 2, ed. Anton Powell (Hoboken: Wiley, 2018): 615–42, 616.

Athenian empire,<sup>4</sup> the perioikic poleis made only very few attempts to shake off Spartiate overlordship. In this essay I will seek to determine

<sup>4</sup> They were, nominally, all allies in the Delian League, but Athens, which was by far the largest and richest member of the League, soon came to dominate it and treat it as its empire. For this reason, ancient authors such as Thucydides referred to the other members as ὑπηκόους ἑτάμοαχοι, ‘subject allies’ (for example Thucydides 6.21.2; 6.43; 7.20.2), a useful term I borrow here.

the costs and the rewards of unfreedom, and to answer the question why some poleis chose to revolt when so many did not.

I will look in turn at three occasions when the citizens of individual perioikic poleis turned their backs on Sparta. The first was in the 460s, when two perioikic communities in Messenia – a neighbouring region under Lakedaimonian occupation – decided to join an uprising by the enserfed Messenian population whose ethnicity they shared. I will next consider events between 424 and 393, when the citizens of the perioikic island of Kythera off the southern coast of Laconia<sup>5</sup> joined Athens' Delian League for a number of years – under some coercion from the Athenians – and subsequently fought against their own countrymen. My third case study looks at a number of poleis predominantly in north-eastern Laconia, which broke away after Sparta's defeat at the battle of Leuktra in 371 and joined a newly founded neighbouring city-state, the city of Megalopolis in Arkadia.

I hope to show that their decisions in each case grew out of a particular combination of three factors: (1) a significant weakening of the central power, Sparta; (2) the willingness of another power to support and protect the would-be rebels; and (3) the availability of a separate ethnic identity or origin story on which they could draw to make their wish to secede plausible – perhaps to themselves, but also to other Greeks.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Following Graham Shipley (“‘The Other Lakedaimonians:’ The Dependent Perioikic Poleis of Laconia and Messenia,” in *The Polis as an Urban Centre and as a Political Community*, ed. Mogens Herman Hansen, Acts of the Copenhagen Polis Centre 4, Historisk-filosofiske meddelelser 75 [Copenhagen: Det Kongelige Danske Videnskaberne Selskab, 1997]: 189–281, 52), I use ‘Laconia’ as a geographical or topographical term for the south-eastern part of the Peloponnese, roughly corresponding to the modern *nomós* of Lakonia; and ‘Lakonikē’ to refer to the territory controlled by Sparta. Before the year 369, Lakonikē included Messenia, the area west of the Taygetos range. In antiquity, Lakedaimon could confusingly denote *both* the city of Sparta and the state of the Lakedaimonians; I use it to refer to the polity of the Lakedaimonians, i.e. the political entity made up of Spartans plus perioikoi.

<sup>6</sup> For the rise of regional ethnic identities in the Peloponnese, especially during the fourth century, see the contributions in Peter Funke and Nino Luraghi, eds., *The Politics of Ethnicity and the Crisis of the Peloponnesian League*, Hellenic Studies Series 32 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).



## Perioikic Dependency

Sparta controlled a very large territory that went far beyond its own agricultural hinterland. This situation had probably come about gradually during the early archaic age (in the eighth and seventh centuries), as smallish local settlements in Laconia were slowly drawn into the orbit of the much larger, richer and more powerful city of Sparta.<sup>7</sup> In a process that we can no longer reconstruct their inhabitants acquired the citizenship of the Lakedaimonian state without losing that of their own home communities.<sup>8</sup> Most scholars agree that in the classical period, there were some thirty perioikic poleis.<sup>9</sup> A Greek polis during that period, roughly between 650 and 340 (all dates mentioned are BCE unless stated otherwise), was ‘an urbanised micro-state’<sup>10</sup> whose citizen community

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<sup>7</sup> Victor Ehrenberg, “Der Damos im archaischen Sparta,” *Hermes* 68, no. 3 (1933): 288–305, 303; Franz Hampl, “Poleis ohne Territorium,” *Klio* 32 (1939): 10–11 in 1–60; Donald Kagan, *The Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969): 10; Jonathan Hall, “Sparta, Lakedaimon and the Nature of Perioikic Dependency,” in *Further Studies in the Ancient Greek Polis*, ed. Pernille Flensted-Jensen, *Historia Einzelschriften* 138, Papers from the Copenhagen Polis Centre 5 (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2000): 83–85 in 73–89. (Hall’s paper also includes an overview of the scholarship.) We can observe similar processes at work with the polis of Elis in the north-western Peloponnese and its perioikic communities, which had originally been allies, see James Roy, “Elis,” in *The Politics of Ethnicity and the Crisis of the Peloponnesian League*, ed. Peter Funke and Nino Luraghi, *Hellenic Studies Series* 32 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009): 38–40 in 30–48.

<sup>8</sup> I follow Hall in assuming that perioikoi must have had two ethnic and political ‘nationalities’: of their respective home town (Sparta, Gytheion, Thouria etc.) and of the Lakedaimonian state (Hall, “Sparta, Lakedaimon and the Nature of Perioikic Dependency”: 79–80; so also Mogens Herman Hansen, “Was Sparta a Normal or an Exceptional Polis?” in *Sparta: Comparative Approaches*, ed. Stephen Hodkinson [Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales, 2009]: 385–416, 387). For a possible parallel see Thomas Heine Nielsen’s discussion of the double ethnics held by some Arkadians as citizens both of their respective home polis and of the Arkadian Federation: Thomas Heine Nielsen, *Arkadia and its Poleis in the Archaic and Classical Periods*, *Hypomnemata* 140 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002): 59–63.

<sup>9</sup> For a complete overview of the perioikic poleis see Graham Shipley, “Lakedaimon,” in *An Inventory of Archaic and Classical Poleis*, ed. Mogens Herman Hansen and Thomas Heine Nielsen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004): 569–98, and Graham Shipley, “Messenia,” *An Inventory of Archaic and Classical Poleis*, ed. Mogens Herman Hansen and Thomas Heine Nielsen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004): 547–68.

<sup>10</sup> Mogens Herman Hansen, “Introduction,” in *An Inventory of Archaic and Classical Poleis. An Investigation Conducted by the Copenhagen Polis Centre for the Danish National*

lived by the same laws, traditions and religious cults and often also claimed descent from the same tribe or a (usually mythical) common ancestor.<sup>11</sup> The Copenhagen Polis Centre (CPC) classified them as one type of dependent polis,<sup>12</sup> i.e. a political community with its own laws and traditions, its temples, cults and local court of law, as well as a citizen assembly with the right to pass decrees of citizenship and proxeny,<sup>13</sup> but without the ability to autonomously decide its own foreign or military policy.<sup>14</sup> Control lay in the hands of the dominant polis, which could – and did – make demands on its dependents, most usually in the shape of tribute payments and/or military service, but also adherence to a particular form of government.<sup>15</sup>

As Lakedaimonians, the perioikoi were required to render military service.<sup>16</sup> They were, however, never consulted,<sup>17</sup> and on occasion not even informed, about where and against whom they would go to war

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*Research Foundation*, ed. Hansen, Mogens Herman and Thomas Heine Nielsen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004): 3–153, 3.

- <sup>11</sup> Hansen, “Introduction”: 12; Winfried Schmitz, *Die griechische Gesellschaft. Eine Sozialgeschichte der archaischen und klassischen Zeit* (Heidelberg: Verlag Antike, 2014): 9.
- <sup>12</sup> Hansen, “Typology of Dependent Poleis”: 87; Thomas Heine Nielsen, “A Survey of Dependent Poleis in Classical Arcadia,” in *More Studies in the Ancient Greek Polis*, ed. Mogens Herman Hansen and Kurt Raaflaub, *Historia Einzelschriften* 108 (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2006): 63–64 and 73–75 in 63–105.
- <sup>13</sup> A *proxenos* is often compared to a modern honorary consul. In William Mack’s excellent definition, ‘Proxenoï were local citizens who facilitated interactions at both formal diplomatic and private levels for the citizens of particular external states’, “Where Are the Proxenoï? Social Network Analysis, Connectivity and the Greek Poleis,” *Past & Present* 257, no. 1 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtab036>: 1.
- <sup>14</sup> Hansen, “Typology of Dependent Poleis”: 88.
- <sup>15</sup> Fritz Gschnitzer, *Abhängige Orte im griechischen Altertum*: 166–67; and see Franz Hampl, “Poleis ohne Territorium,” *Klio* 32 (1939): 142.
- <sup>16</sup> This is often cited as one of the markers of their dependency (see for example Nielsen, “A Survey of Dependent Poleis in Classical Arcadia”: 73); but in fact, as Gschnitzer observed, should rather be understood as part of their duty as Lakedaimonian citizens; Gschnitzer, *Abhängige Orte im griechischen Altertum*: 174.
- <sup>17</sup> ‘The Lakedaimonians’ (= the Spartan assembly) or the highest-ranking magistrates, the ephors, would issue orders for mobilisation and send messengers to the perioikic poleis. They in turn would send their soldiers; see e.g. Xenophon, *Hellenica* 3.5.7. For a list and discussion of all fifteen passages in Xenophon’s *Hellenica* in which Sparta ordered mobilisation see Nicolas Richer, *Les Éphores. Études sur l’Histoire et sur l’Image de Sparte (VIIIe-IIIe siècle avant Jésus-Christ)*, *Histoire ancienne et médiévale* 50 (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1998): 324–34.

(Thucydides 5.54.1).<sup>18</sup> Instead, they were simply told to send contingents of heavy infantrymen (hoplites) and probably also light-armed fighters (peltasts)<sup>19</sup> and archers,<sup>20</sup> and to follow the commanding Spartan general, usually one of the kings.<sup>21</sup> The Spartans encroached on their rights in other ways: the kings owned crown estates in the territory ‘of many perioikic poleis’ (ἐν πολλαῖς τῶν περιοίκων πόλεων, Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* 15.3),<sup>22</sup> and the perioikoi probably paid a form of land tax to Sparta.<sup>23</sup> Noticeably few individual perioikoi are named in ancient historiography, because almost all of the military and

<sup>18</sup> However, Jean Ducat rightly stressed the exceptional nature of this occasion: ‘La précision donnée par Thucydide dans [cette] passage [...] suggère par son existence même qu’en général les Périèques étaient informés de l’objectif de la campagne qui s’engageait.’ (‘The detail given by Thucydides in [this] passage [...] suggests by its very existence that the perioikoi were generally informed about the purpose of a campaign at its outset.’) Jean Ducat, “Le statut des périèques lacédémoniens,” *Ktèma* 33 (2008): 1–86, 34.

<sup>19</sup> Xenophon, *Hellenica* 3.4.8; 5.1.33; cf. Kahrstedt, *Griechisches Staatsrecht*: 72; Barbara Wallner, *Die Perioiken im Staat Lakedaïmon* (Hamburg: Kovac, 2008): 342–44; Ducat, “The Perioikoi”: 603.

<sup>20</sup> See the persuasive argument recently advanced by Nicolette Pavlides, “Non-Spartans in the Lakedaimonian Army: The Evidence from Laconia,” *Historia* 69, no. 2 (2020): 155 and 176–77 in 154–84.

<sup>21</sup> The precise composition and organization of the Lakedaimonian army is still contested. John Lazenby argued that the perioikoi were only employed in some campaigns outside the Peloponnese (such as the battle of Plataia in 490, where Spartans and perioikoi had famously fought in separate contingents, Herodotos 9.10.1; 9.28.2), and that the elite Spartan *homoioi* or ‘Peers’ were routinely joined by Spartans of lesser citizenship status (John Lazenby, *The Spartan Army* [Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1985]: 13–20 and 45–46). While his argument was accepted by Cameron Hawkins (“Spartans and *Perioikoi*. The Organization and Ideology of the Lakedaimonian Army in the Fourth Century BCE,” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 51, no. 3 [2011]: 408–13 in 401–34), it has been rejected by most scholars, who agree that the Lakedaimonian army was composed of Spartans plus perioikoi, and that furthermore from the late fifth or early fourth century onwards, the army consisted of mixed (rather than separate) units of Spartans and perioikoi: Cartledge, *Agésilaos*: 37–43; Hans van Wees, *Greek Warfare: Myths and Realities* (London: Duckworth, 2004): 83–84; Jean Ducat, “Le statut des périèques lacédémoniens”: 38–41; Pavlides, “Non-Spartans in the Lakedaimonian Army”: 156; Kulesza, “Citizenship and the Spartan Kosmos”: 212.

<sup>22</sup> Translations from the Greek are mine unless otherwise noted.

<sup>23</sup> Pseudo-Plato, *Alcibiades* 1.122e; Ephoros *apud* Strabon 8.5.4 = *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 70 F 117; and see the discussion in Douglas MacDowell, *Spartan Law*, *Scottish Classical Studies* 1 (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1986): 28.

political movers and shakers were Spartiates.<sup>24</sup> Only very occasionally, and late in Lakedaimonian history, do we hear of perioikoi in command posts: Deiniadas, ‘a perioikos’, commanded a fleet off Asia Minor in 412 (Thucydides 8.22.1), and Neon from Asine served as second-in-command (ὑποστράτηγος) to the Spartan general Cheirisophos in 401 (Xenophon, *Anabasis* 5.6.36; 6.4.11). Phrynīs, again ‘a perioikos’, was sent to Chios as a spy in 413/2 (Thucydides 8.6.4). The ephors, the highest-ranking magistrates in Sparta, were entitled to seize and perhaps even to execute any perioikos without trial.<sup>25</sup>

The city of Sparta in its heyday in the fifth century BCE had between five and eight thousand citizens. Perhaps as many ‘other Lakedaimonians’ lived in their thirty or so small market towns scattered across an area of some 5,000 sq km (about the size of Trinidad or the US state of Delaware).<sup>26</sup> Archaeologists estimate that a perioikic town had on

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<sup>24</sup> Notable exceptions include Phrynīs (Thucydides 8.6.4); Deiniadas (Thucydides 8.22.1); and Eudikos (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 5.4.39), ‘the only named perioikos in [Xenophon’s] *Hellenica*’, Paul Cartledge, *Agasilaos and the Crisis of Sparta* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987): 231. See also the discussion in Carlos Villafane Silva, “The Perioikoi: A Social, Economic and Military Study of the Other Lacedaemonians” (PhD diss., University of Liverpool, 2015): 36–38 and 98–109, although I am not convinced by his apologetic endeavour. The point is not whether individual (or indeed all) perioikoi were ‘capable [...] of leading’ (ibid. 27) or ‘able to contribute to the execution of foreign policy’ (ibid. 75), but rather that the Spartans deliberately prevented most perioikoi from doing so, and perioikic poleis from being politically autonomous. This was due to a structural asymmetry between the two groups, the authors of which were the Spartans.

<sup>25</sup> Seize without trial: Xenophon, *Hellenica* 3.3.8; execute: Isocrates 12.181. Most scholars take Isocrates’ claim to be an exaggeration, see Ducat, “Le statut des périèques lacédémoniens”: 34; Thomas Blank, *Logos und Praxis. Sparta als politisches Exemplum in den Schriften des Isokrates*, *Klio Beihefte NF 23* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014): 560 with n. 256. – For the second-class status of the perioikoi see also Norbert Mertens, “*Ouk homioi, agathoi de*: The Perioikoi in the Classical Lakedaimonian Polis,” in *Sparta: Beyond the Mirage*, ed. Anton Powell, Stephen Hodkinson and Nikos Birgalias (London: Duckworth, 2002): 285–303, 293; Ducat, “The Perioikoi”: 607; *contra* Detlef Lotze, “Bürger zweiter Klasse: Spartas Periöken. Ihre Stellung und Funktion im Staat der Lakedaimonier,” in *Bürger und Unfreie im vorhellenistischen Griechenland. Ausgewählte Aufsätze von Detlef Lotze*, ed. Walter Ameling and Klaus Zimmermann (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2000): 175–76 in 171–83.

<sup>26</sup> Shipley, “Sparta and its Perioikic Neighbours”: 51.

average between one and four hundred citizens,<sup>27</sup> although sizes certainly varied.<sup>28</sup>

Inland perioikic cities, like Sparta itself, had no walls.<sup>29</sup> It used to be thought in antiquity (and by some modern scholars) that their fearful reputation alone protected the Lakedaimonians, but archaeological finds have shown that several perioikic poleis on the coast and near the northern land border to Arkadia were already walled in the fifth century, and fortifications have been uncovered at sites of potential incursion, some of which have been dated to the sixth century.<sup>30</sup> This puts a rather different complexion on Sparta's lack of walls: the city did not need them because its first line of defence had been outsourced, as it were, to the perioikoi. (And to others, such as the freed Helots who were settled in Lepreon to guard the border with Elis, Thucydides 5.34.1).

The nature of Sparta's control over the perioikic poleis rested on relations that existed primarily between Spartans and the aristocratic elites of each polis,<sup>31</sup> rather than *among* the perioikic poleis: a model described by Johan Galtung as 'vertical interaction relation' in the manner of a rimless wheel: contact flowed only from the hub along each

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<sup>27</sup> In ancient Greece, the category of 'citizens' did not equal 'inhabitants', but included only the adult, freeborn men. A very small polis with two hundred or so (male, freeborn) citizens would have had up to one thousand inhabitants altogether, including unfree men and both free and unfree women and children.

<sup>28</sup> Isocrates 12.179, largely confirmed by archaeological findings, see Richard Catling, "The Survey Area from the Early Iron Age to the Classical Period," in *Continuity and Change in a Greek Rural Landscape. The Laconia Survey*, vol 1, *Methodology and Interpretation*, ed. William Cavanagh, Richard Catling, Joost Crouwel, Graham Shipley, Pamela Armstrong, Deborah Miles-Williams and Lucy Farr (London: The British School at Athens, 2002): 151–256, 163 and 246; Graham Shipley, "The Extent of Spartan Territory in the Late Classical and Hellenistic Periods," *Annual of the British School at Athens* 95 (2000): 367–90, 384; Nigel Kennell, *Spartans. A New History* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010): 91.

<sup>29</sup> Hawkins, "Spartans and *Perioikoi*": 431.

<sup>30</sup> Shipley, "Sparta and its Perioikic Neighbours": 62 and 66–67; Wallner, *Die Perioiken*: 285 with n. 968; Pavlides, "Non-Spartans in the Lakedaimonian Army": 159–61, with references.

<sup>31</sup> Xenophon, *Hellenica* 5.3.9. refers explicitly to τῶν περιόικων [...] καλοὶ κάγαθοι (literally 'the beautiful and virtuous of the perioikoi', the usual term by which Greek aristocrats referred to themselves). The mention in Plutarch, *Cleomenes* 11.2 of τοῖς χαριεστάτοις τῶν περιόικων ('the most graceful [or elegant] of the perioikoi') is a reference to that same elite. See also Cartledge, *Agesilaos*: 177–78; Stefan Rebenich, *Xenophon. Die Verfassung der Spartaner* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1998): 140.

spoke, resulting in ‘a *dependency* of the Periphery on the Center.’<sup>32</sup> This model is mirrored on the ground, literally, by the network of ancient roads identified by archaeologists across Laconia in recent years.<sup>33</sup> The roads were the responsibility of the kings: they were controlled by the centre.<sup>34</sup> (See map 1.) These roads carried not only wagons loaded with produce, soldiers marching off to battle and armed units dispatched to possible trouble spots in times of crisis (Thucydides 4.55.1; 4.56.1). They also served as a web that transmitted power – from the capital to its outlying satellites, but also from the perioikoi back towards Sparta. This vertical interaction, unequal though it was, served the interests of the elite of each perioikic micro-state, whose members benefited from it in terms of wealth and status.<sup>35</sup> Jean Ducat plausibly suggested the existence of hereditary ties between perioikic families and Sparta’s kings,<sup>36</sup> and there probably also were relations of clientage to members of the Spartan elite.

It is perhaps more precise to speak of three different types of dependency, some of which were mutual while others were more one-sided. (1) Sparta itself was dependent on the perioikic communities *collectively* – for supplying fighters for the army, providing land for the kings and perhaps also for paying tribute. However, this broader dependency was more than compensated for by its ‘rimless wheel’ type of interaction with the perioikic poleis, by which it easily dominated each *individual* community. (2) Each perioikic polis was consequently asymmetrically

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<sup>32</sup> Johan Galtung, “A Structural Theory of Imperialism,” *Journal of Peace Research* 8, no. 2 (1971): 89–90 in 81–117 (*italics* and capital initials in original).

<sup>33</sup> For the road network see Giannis Pikoulas’ comprehensive monograph, *Τὸ Ὀδικὸ Δίκτυο τῆς Λακωνικῆς* (Athens: Horos, 2012), esp. 54–287; and see also Jacqueline Christien, “Roads and Quarries in Laconia,” trans. Christopher Annandale and Anton Powell, in *A Companion to Sparta*, vol. 2, ed. Anton Powell (Hoboken: Wiley, 2018): 615–42, both with maps.

<sup>34</sup> Herodotos 6.56.4, and see Pikoulas, *Τὸ Ὀδικὸ Δίκτυο τῆς Λακωνικῆς*: 527–28.

<sup>35</sup> Galtung proposed that in ‘the perfect type of imperialism [...] the elites in the Periphery nations [would be] almost undistinguishable from the elites in the Center nations where living conditions are concerned’; Galtung, “A Structural Theory of Imperialism”: 100 (capital initials in original).

<sup>36</sup> Ducat, “The Perioikoi”: 605. There is perhaps still a faint echo of these earlier ties in Livius’ report of the attempt by the ‘tyrant’ Nabis in 193 to win over the leading men (*principi*) of perioikic *poleis* (Livius 35.13.1).

and strongly dependent on the ‘capital’. There was, finally, (3) a sort of interdependence between the Spartan elite and the elites of the perioikic poleis. This was, again, asymmetrical but probably experienced by the perioikic elites as more strongly mutually beneficial. Paradoxically, this fixed their dependency more securely.

## The Advantages of Dependency

The ‘dwellers-around’ can be described in some ways as second-class Lakedaimonians, although this would not have been in any way noticeable when one of them travelled elsewhere in the Greek world (see for example Diodorus Siculus 13.85.3). When writing about the Lakedaimonians collectively, ancient authors for the most part did not differentiate between Spartans and perioikoi – they were all just Lakedaimonians to them,<sup>37</sup> citizens of a state famed for its political stability and military prowess.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Jean Ducat, “The Ghost of the Lakedaimonian State,” trans. Anton Powell, in *Sparta: The Body Politic*, ed. Anton Powell and Stephen Hodkinson (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2010): 183–210, 189, and see also 190 with a list of examples from Herodotos, Thucydides and Xenophon. See now also Adrien Delahaye, “Laconian Material Culture and Lacedaemonian Identity. The Laconian Sanctuaries Case,” in *Regions and Communities in Early Greece (1200–550 BCE)*, ed. Maximilian Rönnerberg and Veronika Sos-sau, Tübinger Archäologische Forschungen 35 (Rahden/Westf.: Marie Leidorf, 2022): 123–39, 124.

<sup>38</sup> Political stability: Thucydides 1.18.1; military prowess: Herodotos 7.228.2; persisting fame: Thucydides 4.40.1–2 and Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* 1.1. Despite Paul Cartledge’s assertion that the ‘brilliantly executed [...] complicated marching manoeuvre’ described by Xenophon at *Hellenica* 6.5.18–19 could only have been performed by ‘men trained in Spartan drill’ (Cartledge, *Agasilaos*: 232), the army in question is clearly Lakedaimonian: we’re told that after their arrival back in Lakonikē at the end of the campaign, Agasilaos ‘disbanded the Spartiates to go home, and sent the perioikoi to their own poleis.’ (τοὺς μὲν Σπαρτιάτας ἀπέλυσεν οἴκαδε, τοὺς δὲ περιόικους ἀφῆκεν ἐπὶ τὰς ἑαυτῶν πόλεις, Xenophon, *Hellenica* 6.5.21). See also Roel Konijnendijk’s observation that ‘[t]he impetuous charge of the mercenaries and allies at Coronea in 394 BC (X. HG 4.3.17) suggests that only the Spartans themselves—and the perioikoi who fleshed out their phalanx—were drilled to advance slowly.’ Roel Konijnendijk, “Commemoration Through Fear: The Spartan Reputation as a Weapon of War,” in *Commemorating War and War Dead: Ancient and Modern*, ed. Maurizio Giangiulio, Elena Franchi and Giorgia Proietti (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2017): 257–70, 260 n. 16.



It has been said that Sparta controlled its allies by means of ‘soft power’, such as insisting on oligarchic constitutions (i.e. government by and, importantly, for a small number of wealthy and conservative aristocrats), to whose leaders it delegated ‘the maintenance of the status quo’.<sup>39</sup> The same was doubtless true of the perioikic poleis.

There are indications that perioikic elites identified strongly as Lakedaimonians. Spartan men famously wore their hair long at a time when most other Greeks cut theirs short.<sup>40</sup> However, in fact both Herodotos and Xenophon employ the term *Λακεδαιμόνιοι*, *Lakedaimónioi*, i.e. Lakedaimonians, *not* Spartiates; and Aristotle similarly says ἐν Λακεδαίμονι, ‘in Lakedaimon’, which might refer equally to the city of Sparta and to the entire region of Lakonikē. To my knowledge Detlef Lotze is the only scholar who asked the very sensible question of whether, in fact, this question of hairstyle extended to all Lakedaimonians. Had the perioikoi had short hair, they would have been very easily distinguishable on the battlefield and marked out as non-Spartiates. None of our ancient authors ever makes any mention of this, including both Thucydides and Xenophon, who had a good deal of personal experience of Lakedaimonians, both on and off the battlefield. Lotze therefore concluded that Spartans and perioikoi alike wore their hair long.<sup>41</sup>

After a battle, the Lakedaimonians buried their fallen in a mass grave on or near the battlefield; the Athenians, by contrast, brought theirs back to Athens for burial at home.<sup>42</sup> We know from Plutarch that only

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<sup>39</sup> Graham Shipley, *The Early Hellenistic Peloponnese. Politics, Economies and Networks, 338–197 BC* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018): 33 (quote), and see also 128–34. For Spartan allies and oligarchy see Antony Andrewes, “Spartan Imperialism?” in *Imperialism in the Ancient World. The Cambridge University Research Seminar in Ancient History*, ed. Peter Garnsey and Richard Whittaker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979): 91–102, 95; and especially Sarah Bolmarcich, “Thucydides 1.19.1 and the Peloponnesian League,” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 45 (2007): 27–31 in 5–34.

<sup>40</sup> Herodotos 1.82.8; Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* 11.3; Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1.9 1367a29–31.

<sup>41</sup> Or at any rate all Lakedaimonian hoplites, i.e. property-owning men of the upper and perhaps middle classes (‘Männer einer Ober- oder vielleicht noch, wenn man so sagen will, Mittelschicht’), Lotze, “Bürger zweiter Klasse”: 174.

<sup>42</sup> Paul Christesen, “Herodotus 9.85 and Spartan Burial Customs,” *Classica et Mediaevalia* 69 (2021): 1–72, 11.



citizen men who died in battle (and priestesses) were allowed to have their names inscribed post mortem (Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 27.1–2). This is usually assumed to apply to Spartiates only. However, a total of seventeen stone markers inscribed with a single name (no patronymic) and the words ἐν πολέμῳ, *en polémō*, ‘in war’, have been found across Laconia, half of them in perioikic territory.<sup>43</sup> Polly Low plausibly argued that they ‘provide a medium by which those on the margins can make a claim for inclusion in the more narrowly defined political community.’<sup>44</sup> By putting up markers inscribed with only a name and the words *en polémō*, the perioikic Lakedaimonians demonstrated their adherence to Lakedaimonian customs.

Taken together, all of these factors amount to what scholars at the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies (BCDSS) characterized as an asymmetrically dependent relationship between the perioikic poleis and Sparta. They characterize asymmetrical dependencies as ‘dynamic relational processes between two or more actors [...] [that] are usually facilitated or supported by an institutional background, i.e., a social order which allows certain actors (A) to control the actions and/or the access to the resources of other actors (B).’<sup>45</sup> This would result in ‘social relations of asymmetrical dependency [that] appear to be self-evident, the results of an alleged “natural order”.’<sup>46</sup> We might describe the ‘natural order’ in the state of Lakedaimon as underpinned by the paired mechanism characterized by Norbert Elias and John Scotson as ‘group charisma’ and ‘group disgrace’: ‘[D]ominant groups with a higher power superiority attribute to themselves, as collectivities, and to those

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<sup>43</sup> ‘Of the seventeen stones which have an attested provenance [of a total of 24 inscribed stones found], just under half (eight) were found in and immediately around Sparta town. The other nine have turned up in widely scattered locations: at Pellana, Kefala, Sellasia, Geraki, Thalamai (on the edge of the Mani), Mari (in the foothills of Mt. Parion); and one even outside Laconia, at Alea in Tegea.’ Polly Low, “Commemorating the Spartan War Dead,” in *Sparta and War*, ed. Stephen Hodkinson and Anton Powell (Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales, 2006): 86–110, 88.

<sup>44</sup> Low, “Commemorating the Spartan War Dead”: 91.

<sup>45</sup> Julia Winnebeck, Ove Sutter, Adrian Hermann, Christoph Antweiler and Stephan Conermann, “The Analytical Concept of Asymmetrical Dependency,” *Journal of Global Slavery* 8 (2023): 1–59, 25.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*: 17.

who belong to them, as families and individuals, a distinguishing group charisma. [...] [P]ower superiority is equated with human merit, human merit with special grace of nature or gods.<sup>47</sup> Unlike the Spartans, the perioikoi did not have a collective identity: each identified as a citizen of the state of Lakedaïmon and of his own polis, which inevitably was vastly smaller and weaker than the big city of Sparta with its several thousand citizens. Success in battle was the result of the combined force of the Lakedaïmonians, but because the Spartans made the decisions, they could claim for themselves a larger part of that success. The kings, for all that they officially were ‘the kings of the Lakedaïmonians’,<sup>48</sup> resided in Sparta: it was in Sparta that they held priesthoods to the highest of the gods, Zeus (Herodotos 6.56.1) – their own ancestor, as Robert Parker pointed out<sup>49</sup> – and had control over communication with the divine realm: the interpretation of oracles was a royal prerogative.<sup>50</sup> Importantly, while even non-royal Spartiates could claim divine descent (Plutarch, *Lysander* 24.5), the perioikoi could not.

The perioikoi were in an unequal relationship that involved dependency and domination, but also a sort of symbiosis.<sup>51</sup> They were invested in the state they shared with the Spartans,<sup>52</sup> and they probably believed in Spartan superiority.<sup>53</sup> It may not always have been a pleasant relationship for those on the periphery, but, as Xenophon observed, there

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<sup>47</sup> Norbert Elias and John Scotson, *The Established and the Outsiders. A Sociological Enquiry into Community Problems* (London: Sage, 1994): xxiii.

<sup>48</sup> Shipley, “Sparta and its Perioikic Neighbours”: 67–68.

<sup>49</sup> The kings claimed descent from Herakles, a son of Zeus; cf. Robert Parker, “Religion in Public Life,” in *Sparta*, ed. Michael Whitby, Edinburgh Readings on the Ancient World 2 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002): 161–62 in 161–74.

<sup>50</sup> Herodotos 6.57.3; 6.90.2; Xenophon, *Hellenica* 3.3.4; Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lakedaïmonians* 15.2; Aristotle, *Politics* 2.1285a. See also Parker, “Religion in Public Life”: 163.

<sup>51</sup> With Wallner, *Die Perioiken*: 290; and see Diodorus Siculus 13.68.4.

<sup>52</sup> With Adrian Delahaye, who suggested their ‘shared Lakedaïmonian identity’ was ‘key to understand[ing] the Perioikoi’s loyalty towards Sparta.’ Delahaye, “Laconian Material Culture and Lakedaïmonian Identity”: 125; see his discussion, with numerous references, at *ibid.* 127–33.

<sup>53</sup> For the mechanism of a group internalising its own perceived inferiority see Norbert Elias, *Gruppencharisma und Gruppenschande*, *Aus dem Archiv* 7 (Marbach am Neckar: Deutsche Schillergesellschaft, 2014): 19–20; see also Winnebeck et al., “The Analytical Concept of Asymmetrical Dependency”: 17.

were advantages to following those who had power.<sup>54</sup> And of course, the ‘other Lakedaimonians’ still *were* Lakedaimonians, they were citizens with rights and privileges, albeit fewer than the Spartans. They could easily imagine the curious tripartite order of the Lakedaimonian state as, in fact, a binary order of citizens versus slaves. The few steps that separated perioikoi from Spartans were as nothing compared to the chasm that yawned between citizens and slaves. It wasn’t, of course, quite as simple. But the ways in which a more powerful group ensures its dominance over a subaltern one, such as ‘mechanisms of stigmatisation’<sup>55</sup> or ‘Rituale der Diskriminierung’, by which the subaltern group is marked as ‘schlecht, erniedrigend und verunreinigend’ (‘bad, demeaning and polluting’),<sup>56</sup> were employed in Lakedaimon *not* against the second-class citizens, but against the Helots, the numerous class of enserfed rural sharecroppers and labourers.<sup>57</sup> This plainly signalled even to the lowliest perioikic peasant that he ranked far above the enslaved.

## Collusion, and the Impossibility of Escape

For a couple of centuries, Lakedaimon was one of the most powerful states in the Greek world. The Lakedaimonians were victorious in battle: winning not only glory, but also rich spoils. They were most famous

<sup>54</sup> Xenophon, *Hellenica* 5.2.19; and see also Gschnitzer, *Abhängige Orte im griechischen Altertum*: 142; Graham Shipley, “Perioikos. The Discovery of Classical Lakonia,” in *Philolakon. Lakonian Studies in Honour of Hector Catling*, ed. Jan Motyka-Sanders (London: The British School at Athens, 1992): 211–26, 225.

<sup>55</sup> Elias and Scotson, *The Established and the Outsiders*: xxiii.

<sup>56</sup> Elias, *Gruppencharisma und Gruppenschande*: 18.

<sup>57</sup> Plutarch, *Moralia* 239a 30; Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 28.4–5; cf. Plato, *Laws* 7.816e. Ducat, “Le Mépris des Hilotes,” *Annales (ESC)* 30 (1974): 1451–64; Nino Luraghi, “Der Erdbenaufstand und die Entstehung der messenischen Identität,” in *Gab es das griechische Wunder? Griechenland zwischen dem Ende des 6. und der Mitte des 5. Jahrhunderts v. Chr., Tagungsbeiträge des 16. Fachsymposiums der Alexander-von-Humboldt-Stiftung, veranstaltet vom 5. bis 9. April 1999 in Freiburg im Breisgau*, ed. Dietrich Papenfuß and Volker Martin Strocka (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2001): 279–301: 296; Hans van Wees, “Conquerors and Serfs: Wars of Conquest and Forced Labour in Archaic Greece,” in *Helots and Their Masters in Laconia and Messenia: Histories, Ideologies, Structures*, ed. Nino Luraghi and Susan E. Alcock (Cambridge, MA: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2003): 33–80, 35 n. 6.

of all for the longevity and stability of their political system, which in antiquity was believed to have endured unchanged for centuries<sup>58</sup> without the scourge that plagued other Greeks: *stasis*, civil war. They were envied for the safety in which they lived: with a few exceptions,<sup>59</sup> no enemy set foot on Lakedaimonian soil.<sup>60</sup> (The perioikic coastal poleis were harried by Athenian fleets on a number of occasions, but there was no wholesale invasion of the sort that Attica repeatedly suffered during the Peloponnesian War, when Peloponnesian armies ravaged the fields and spoiled or carried off produce.)

Most perioikoi probably never questioned their dependent position within the state of Lakedaimon; or, if they did, thought it a price worth paying for the security, prosperity and fame they enjoyed. In Graham Shipley's phrase, perioikic elites can be seen 'as collaborators with the Spartiate ruling class and sharers in the profits of the Spartan system.'<sup>61</sup> Their investment in the Lakedaimonian system would have made it almost impossible for them even to imagine leaving it. I believe that what the BCDSS' scholars posited for dependent individuals can equally be applied to dependent political communities such as the perioikic poleis: 'The established political, social, and economic surroundings guaranteed that the dependent individuals had virtually no prospect of exiting or significantly changing their respective relations of dependency', making this an 'asymmetrical, i.e., strong or enduring, form of dependency.'<sup>62</sup>

This is not to say that all citizens of all perioikic poleis were content all of the time. Our sources tell us of isolated incidents of known or suspected revolt, and it is likely that there were others. A network

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<sup>58</sup> Thucydides 1.18.1; Lysias 33.7; Isocrates 8.95.

<sup>59</sup> Exceptions include the successful Athenian capture and occupation of the islands of Sphakteria (near Pylos) and Kythera during the Archidamian war. Both were used as bases for incursions into Lakedaimonian territory. For Kythera see below.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Lysias 33.7: θαυμάζω δὲ Λακεδαιμονίους [...] μόνοι δὲ οἰκοῦντες ἀπόρθητοι καὶ ἀτείχιστοι καὶ ἀστασίαστοι καὶ ἀήττητοι ('I wonder about the Lakedaimonians [...] who alone live in homes unravaged und unwalled, and without *stasis* and unconquered').

<sup>61</sup> Graham Shipley, "Perioeic Society," in *Sparta*, ed. Michael Whitby (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002): 182–89, 187. Jonathan Hall similarly described them as 'not so much hostages to Spartan terrorism as [...] fellow-collaborators in their own dependency', Hall, "Lakedaimon and the Nature of Perioikic Dependency": 87.

<sup>62</sup> Winnebeck et al., "The Analytical Concept of Asymmetrical Dependency": 6–7, and see also 28.

of loyal local informers helped Spartans and loyal perioikic elites to nip such cases in the bud: a well-known example is the order given to Kinadon – a disaffected Spartan of lesser citizenship status – to go to the perioikic polis of Aulon and arrest certain persons there (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 3.3.8). In the case of Kinadon this was probably a ruse, but it cannot have been anything out of the ordinary, or it would have aroused suspicion. Over the course of Lakedaimonian history, the majority of dwellers-around remained loyal to that state and did not, as far as we know, rebel either in word or in deed.

But there were exceptions: several times perioikoi individually and collectively turned against Sparta – some under duress, but others of their own choosing.

### 1. ‘From the perioikoi, the Thourians and Aithaians revolted’ (Thucydides 1.101.2)

Probably in the early 460s,<sup>63</sup> a devastating earthquake shook Laconia. Even in a region prone to tremors, this one stood out; it was known forever after as ‘the great earthquake’ (μέγας σεισμός, *mégas seismós*: Thucydides 1.128.1, Diodorus Siculus 15.66.4; Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 28.6). It destroyed much of the city of Sparta, killing many; and in its wake followed a great uprising of the Helots in both Messenia and Laconia – joined, although they are not always mentioned in accounts of the event, by citizens from two perioikic poleis,<sup>64</sup> Thouria und Aithaia (Thucydides 1.121.2). Interestingly, these cities were located in Messenia, the region bordering Laconia to the west across the Taygetos mountain range. This region had been conquered a century or two earlier (the date is fiercely contested among scholars, but immaterial to my argument) and most

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<sup>63</sup> Although many modern authors use Plutarch’s date of 465, the precise year is not known and may have been any between 469 and 463; see the discussions in Ernst Badian, *From Plataea to Potidaea. Studies in the History and Historiography of the Pentecontaetia* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993): 91–93; Luraghi, “Der Erdbebenaufstand”: 281–85; Jonas Borsch, *Erschiütterte Welt. Soziale Bewältigung von Erdbeben im östlichen Mittelmeerraum der Antike*, *Bedrohte Ordnungen* 11 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018): 95–99.

<sup>64</sup> For the polis status of both communities see the entries for Aithaia (no. 312) and Thouria (no. 322) in Shipley, “Messenia.”

of its population enserfed. Some, however, lived in poleis, micro-states, and clearly identified as Lakedaimonians. But now the inhabitants of two of those poleis had burnt their Lakedaimonian passports, as it were, and joined the Great Revolt.

There followed a period of open war with pitched battles,<sup>65</sup> in one of which the rebels wiped out a contingent of three hundred Lakedaimonians (Herodotos 9.64.2). Eventually, they famously retreated to the stronghold of Mount Ithome, where they dug in and put up fierce resistance for several years against forces of the Lakedaimonians and several of their allies.<sup>66</sup> The Lakedaimonians eventually employed the face-saving mechanism of a Delphic oracle, conveniently remembered,<sup>67</sup> which urged that Sparta let go the suppliants of Zeus of Ithome (Thucydides 1.103.2). A truce was agreed which allowed the rebels to leave the Peloponnese. The Athenians settled them in the port city of Naupaktos just across the Gulf of Corinth. Their sons and grandsons would play a decisive role in the Peloponnesian War, fighting on the Athenian side (Thucydides 4.31–36).

## The Great Revolt

The Great Revolt<sup>68</sup> probably started as a Helot uprising. In Plutarch's suspiciously detailed account (suspicious because he wrote more than

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<sup>65</sup> Thucydides refers to the conflict as πόλεμος, *pólemos*, 'war': 1.101.2; 1.102.1.

<sup>66</sup> Aigina (Thucydides 2.27.2), Plataia (Thucydides 3.54.5), Athens (Thucydides 1.101.2); probably also Arkadian Mantinea (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 5.2.3). See Luraghi, "Der Erdbebenaufstand": 285–86; see also his discussion of the Athenian involvement in the war against the rebels in *The Ancient Messenians: Constructions of Ethnicity and Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008): 186–88.

<sup>67</sup> Anton Powell believed it was 'quite likely invented for the occasion according to Sparta's tradition of strategic deception', "Sparta's Foreign – and Internal – History, 478–403," in *A Companion to Sparta*, vol. 1, ed. Anton Powell (Hoboken: Wiley, 2018): 291–319, 301; see also Anton Powell, "Divination, Royalty and Insecurity in Classical Sparta," in *Sparta: The Body Politic*, ed. Anton Powell and Stephen Hodkinson (Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales, 2010): 54–55 in 35–82.

<sup>68</sup> I borrow the capitalisation from Thomas Figueira's "The Evolution of the Messenian Identity," in *Sparta: New Perspectives*, ed. Steven Hodkinson and Anton Powell (London: Duckworth, 1999): 211–44.

half a millennium after the event, and it is unclear what his sources may have been), the Helot initiators were later joined by ‘not a few of the perioikoi’.<sup>69</sup> It is tempting to imagine the dwellers-around, who had rather more to lose than the Helots, waiting to see how events unfolded before they decided to take the risk and join in. However, at least one modern scholar suggested that the military success of the insurgents was due precisely to perioikic involvement early on.<sup>70</sup>

Interestingly, Thucydides portrays the event as a political revolt in line with attempted secessions by other poleis<sup>71</sup> or an armed coup against the authorities.<sup>72</sup> He also noticeably juxtaposes it in his work with the revolt against Athens by the Thasians, who after a two-year siege agreed to terms, while the rebels on Mount Ithome famously held out for ten years and achieved their freedom.<sup>73</sup>

Clearly, Thucydides cannot have learnt about the revolt from the Spartans. His most likely source of information were the descendants of the rebels, now settled in Naupaktos and known as ‘the Messenians in Naupaktos’, who played a significant role in the Peloponnesian War

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<sup>69</sup> οὐκ ὀλίγους, Plutarch, *Cimon* 16.7; at Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 28.6 he mentions only Helots and Messenians.

<sup>70</sup> Luraghi, “Der Erdbebenaufstand”: 297; Nino Luraghi, *The Ancient Messenians*: 205.

<sup>71</sup> On the basis of linguistic and context-based analysis, Ian Plant concluded that the historiographer depicts the revolt as an ‘attempt at secession from Spartan authority as well as taking up of arms to oppose the Spartans. The ensuing conflict is termed πόλεμος (1.101.2; 1.102.1 etc.) and ἀφίστημι holds some sense of military conflict through the close association between ἐς Ἴθώμην ἀπέστησαν and the consequent war at Ithome πρὸς μὲν οὖν τοὺς ἐν Ἴθώμῃ πόλεμος καθειστήκει Λακεδαιμονίοις. The revolt is an attempt by means of force to defect from the authority of the Spartans.’ Ian Plant, “Aphistemi in Thucydides” (PhD diss., University of Canterbury, New Zealand, 1990): 72.

<sup>72</sup> ‘It is interesting to note that elsewhere Thucydides uses the lexeme ἐπανάστασις [uprising, insurrection] in reference to this revolt, as well as ἀφίστημι [which can mean both “to turn away” and “to secede”]. This word has strictly political connotations, usually meaning an armed coup d’état against a government. For Thucydides to use ἐπανάστασις of this revolt supports the conclusion that elsewhere he saw this ἀπόστασις in terms of its political and military aspects.’ Plant, “Aphistemi in Thucydides”: 74.

<sup>73</sup> Although, as scholars have observed, the conditions of the truce under which the insurgents were allowed to leave (Thucydides 1.103.1) clearly indicate that the Lakedaimonians regarded all of them as slaves: Figueira, “The Evolution of the Messenian Identity”: 234–35; Luraghi, *The Ancient Messenians*: 198; Thomas Figueira, “Thucydides, Ethnic Solidarity, and Messenian Ethnogenesis,” in *Thucydides and Sparta*, ed. Anton Powell and Paula Debnar (Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales, 2020): 119–62, 138.

as allies of the Athenians.<sup>74</sup> Their number may well have included erst-while citizens of the two perioikic settlements who joined the revolt, or their sons, who were keen to highlight the contribution made by their home poleis and who perhaps urged the historian to name them in his account for posterity. Thucydides may also have spoken to veterans (or their descendants) of the Athenian contingent under Kimon sent to help the Lakedaimonians besiege the rebels on Mount Ithome (Thucydides 1.102.1–2; Aristophanes, *Lysistrata* 1144). While less motivated to preserve Messenian history, they may still have remembered the names of the Lakedaimonian poleis that had joined the revolt.

## The Perioikoi of Messenia

The perioikoi of Messenia have a pronounced tendency to fall between the cracks in both ancient and modern historiography.<sup>75</sup> After Epameinondas, the victor of Leuktra, (re)founded independent Messene in the fourth century, Messenian history in general and the Great Revolt in particular were reinterpreted as a struggle of liberation fought by Messenian Helots against their Spartan enslavers.<sup>76</sup> There was no place in this narrative of heroic resistance for ‘collaborating’ Messenian perioikoi. We know even less about them than we do about the perioikoi of Laconia. Archaeological surveys have identified as many as forty-eight archaic

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<sup>74</sup> The various engagements are listed in Figueira, “The Evolution of the Messenian Identity”: 237 n. 17.

<sup>75</sup> A recent example is the otherwise stimulating and informative article by Adrien Delahaye about the use of material culture in determining the shared identity of the ‘the Spartans and Perioikoi of Laconia, the core of Lacedaemon’, which however leaves out Messenia (and the Messenian perioikoi) as ‘a specific component’, whatever that may mean (Delahaye, “Laconian Material Culture and Lacedaemonian Identity”: 124). Delahaye also confidently states that ‘[n]o riots or defections of perioikic communities are recorded in the written sources until the battle of Leuktra. Only some Messenian settlements joined the revolt of the helots,’ *ibid.*: 125.

<sup>76</sup> Encapsulated most clearly in Pausanias’ book 4. The processes of ethnogenesis and retrojected Messenian history and invented tradition have been impressively explored by Nino Luraghi in a monograph and a series of articles; see in particular Luraghi, “Der Erdbebenaufstand”: 279–301; Luraghi, *The Ancient Messenians*.



and classical settlements in Messenia,<sup>77</sup> but we can name only around ten with reasonable confidence, and locate even fewer:<sup>78</sup> we may know the name of a perioikic polis from our literary sources, but we don't know where it was. This is, in fact, the case with Aithaia, as we shall see below. We are also unsure about the ethnic identity of most perioikoi in Messenia, or the stories they told about their origins. Some had come from elsewhere: the people of Asine in south-western Messenia were exiles from the town of the same name in the Argolis, who were settled in Messene by the Spartans (Herodotos 8.73.2; Pausanias 4.8.3). Neighbouring Mothone was home to exiles from Nauplia (also in the Argolis; Pausanias 4.24.4).<sup>79</sup> Other poleis may have been founded by Spartiate or Lakedaimonian settlers sent out to conquered Messenia. And doubtless yet others were inhabited by Messenians who had come to terms (in both senses) with Spartan domination, and who thought of themselves as good Lakedaimonians just as much as those on the other side of the Taygetos mountain range.<sup>80</sup> When in 425 during the Peloponnesian War a contingent of Lakedaimonian hoplites attempted to dislodge the Athenians from the fortifications they had constructed near Pylos on the west coast of Messenia, the first who went against them were 'the Spartiates themselves and the nearest of the perioikoi' (οἱ Σπαρτιαῖται αὐτοὶ μὲν καὶ οἱ ἐγγύτατα τῶν περιοίκων, Thucydides 4.8.1). Presumably these were loyal Messenian perioikoi from the nearby polis of Kyparissos, and perhaps also ones from Mothone.

<sup>77</sup> Luraghi, *The Ancient Messenians*: 117. A number of those forty-eight settlements will have been villages rather than poleis, but even so we know far less about them than we do about neighbouring Laconia.

<sup>78</sup> Shipley, "Sparta and its Perioikic Neighbours": 10; Shipley, "Messenia": 547.

<sup>79</sup> In the light of similar founding tales for a couple of perioikic poleis in Laconia (Thyrea, Thucydides 2.27.1–2; and Epidauros Limera, Pausanias 3.23.6), I believe that Luraghi's scepticism about the non-Messenian origins of Asine and Mothone (Luraghi, "Der Erdbebenaufstand": 292) is unwarranted.

<sup>80</sup> With Luraghi, who plausibly suggested that 'very possibly some sort of narrative [existed] that explained how they had come to be Lakedaimonian *perioikoi*, but no trace of this has been preserved in the sources.' Luraghi, *The Ancient Messenians*: 30; *contra* Figueira, "Thucydides, Ethnic Solidarity, and Messenian Ethnogenesis": 139–40; cf. also also Shipley, "Messenia": 548.

## Thouria and Aithaia

Situated in the foothills to the west of the Taygetos, overlooking the fertile valley of the lower Pamisos river, lay Thouria, one of the most important perioikic poleis in Messenia.<sup>81</sup> The nearby sanctuary of Pohoïdan (the Laconian form of Poseidon) at modern-day Akovitika (some eight kilometres from the town itself) hosted annual games that included communal feasting.<sup>82</sup> The excavators of the site have characterised it as an ‘extra-urban central sanctuary of a region or *ethnos*’,<sup>83</sup> one of whose functions was to serve as a meeting place of local and regional elites.<sup>84</sup> Massimo Nafissi plausibly suggested that part of the function of religious festivals such the *Pohoidaia*, which were celebrated jointly by elite Spartans and elite perioikoi in perioikic towns, was to serve as institutionalised means to integrate the two groups of citizens<sup>85</sup> and so ‘reproduce continuously over time’ the asymmetrical relationship that existed between them.<sup>86</sup> There is no break in the archaeological record, which includes fine symposium pottery, between the seventh and the mid-fourth century.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Luraghi, *The Ancient Messenians*: 27, 205; Massimo Nafissi, “La Stele di Damonon (*Inscriptiones Graecae* V 1, 213 = Moretti, IAG 16), gli Hekatombaia (Strabo 8, 4, 11) e il Sistema Festivo della Laconia d’Epoca Classica,” in *Cultura a Sparta in età classica: atti del seminario di studi, Università statale di Milano, 5–6 maggio 2010*, ed. Francesca Berlinzani, Aristonothos: Scritti per il Mediterraneo Antico 8 (Trento: Tangram Edizioni Scientifiche, 2013): 105–74, 130.

<sup>82</sup> Kiderlen and Themelis, *Das Poseidonheiligtum bei Akovitika*: 19.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*: 28.

<sup>84</sup> Kiderlen and Themelis, *Das Poseidonheiligtum bei Akovitika*: 31–32 and see also 35.

<sup>85</sup> Nafissi, “La stele di Damonon”: 137; the excavators of the site suggested a very similar model: Kiderlen and Themelis, *Das Poseidonheiligtum bei Akovitika*: 32. For religion as an integrative factor see also Parker, “Spartan Religion”: 145; Mertens, “*Ouk Homoioi, Agathoi de*”: 288; Wallner, *Die Perioiken*: 313–36; Pavlides, “The sanctuaries of Apollo Maleatas and Apollo Tyritas”: 279–305.

<sup>86</sup> Winnebeck et al., “The Analytical Concept of Asymmetrical Dependency”: 28

<sup>87</sup> Kiderlen and Themelis, *Das Poseidonheiligtum bei Akovitika*: 24–25. Notably, activities at the sanctuary did come to an end ‘shortly before or shortly after 371–369 BC’, although the excavators stressed that it is impossible to say whether this was related to the end of the Spartan occupation of Messenia or simply reflected the move to a different site: *ibid.* 36.

Even though Thucydides sweepingly claims that ‘the Thourians and Aithaians’ joined in the revolt,<sup>88</sup> we should not imagine that the entire population of Thouria joined the rebels and left for Mount Ithome.<sup>89</sup> Far more likely is a split within the citizen body along political lines seen frequently in classical Greece, of pro-oligarchs v. pro-democrats. During the Peloponnesian War, these factions frequently mapped onto pro-Lakedaimonians and pro-Athenians. (And indeed in this case, the anti-Lakedaimonian rebels were supported by the Athenians, whose staunch allies they became.) After the departure of the anti-Lakedaimonian contingent, the city of Thouria and its government institutions would have been left in the hands of the pro-Lakedaimonian faction,<sup>90</sup> who, one imagines, strenuously (and nervously) assured the Spartans of their undying loyalty.<sup>91</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Thucydides 1.101.2. Ian Plant pointed out that ‘Thucydides deliberately looks upon a revolt as the act of a city as a whole. It is the external relations of a city that are the first concern of the account, not the detail of internal political affairs within the states which revolt.’ Plant, “Aphistemi in Thucydides”: 121. This was echoed by James Morrison, who found that ‘[c]ities are likened to individuals in both speech and narrative within Thucydides’ work.’ James V. Morrison, “A Key Topos in Thucydides: The Comparison of Cities and Individuals,” *American Journal of Philology* 115, no. 4 (1994): 525–41, 525, and see also his detailed analysis at 528–30.

<sup>89</sup> Thomas Figueira estimated that the combined populations of Thouria and Aithaia numbered ‘1,000–1,400 adult male Thouriatiai and Aithaies (at the very outside).’ Figueira, “Thucydides, Ethnic Solidarity, and Messenian Ethnogenesis”: 139.

<sup>90</sup> So also Luraghi, *The Ancient Messenians*: 31; and Thomas Figueira, who contends that ‘many Perioikoi loyal to Sparta probably remained even at Thouria and Aithaia, since the towns were not depopulated’, Figueira, “Thucydides, Ethnic Solidarity, and Messenian Ethnogenesis”: 139.

<sup>91</sup> Nino Luraghi drew attention to a fragment from Euripides quoted by Strabo, which makes the river Pamisos the boundary line between Laconia and Messenia (Eur. Fr. 1083 [Nauck] = Strab. 8.5.6). This would make Thouria, on the east bank of the Pamisos, part of Laconia. Luraghi plausibly interpreted this redrawing of boundaries as ‘part of a conscious attempt at redefining the ethnic allegiance of the *perioikoi* living there [...] a kind of response to Thouria’s Messenian moment’, *The Ancient Messenians*: 32. It is unclear how long this Laconian allegiance lasted. It has been suggested that the Thourians were slow to join the newly independent Messenian polity upon its founding by Epameinondas in 369 (Shipley, “The Extent of Spartan Territory”: 385; Figueira, “Thucydides, Ethnic Solidarity, and Messenian Ethnogenesis”: 139), although Luraghi plausibly challenged this view (*The Ancient Messenians*: 32–36). Interestingly, although far too late to have any bearing on the present case, much later Thourians (during the reign of the Roman emperor Hadrian) would describe Sparta as their *μᾶτρόπολις*, their mother city: *Inscriptiones Graecae* V 1, 1381.

By the time the revolt was over and the rebels had departed the Peloponnese, the First Peloponnesian War had broken out, and the Spartans now had other things to worry about. For military success, they depended on all available hoplites: in other words, in an era before mercenaries were plentifully available for hire, on citizens. I believe that for reasons of expediency, they accepted the remaining Thourians back into the fold and said no more about the matter.

We know very little indeed about the second rebel polis, Aithaia: not even its location.<sup>92</sup> Perhaps the Aithaians joined the rebels *en bloc* and departed with them when they left Mount Ithome. This is just feasible if the town was one of the smaller perioikic settlements, inhabited by perhaps just one hundred citizens. As a civic community in Lakonikē, it would then have ceased to exist altogether; or it may have been resettled by the Spartans with people more likely to be loyal to their cause, as had happened in Asine and Mothone. Aithaia would have sunk back into obscurity and continued to lead an unsung existence, like most other perioikic poleis in Messenia.

Another possibility, suggested by Nino Luraghi, is that the town's name was changed after the revolt. He proposed that Aithaia was the name of the perioikic polis at the foot of Mount Ithome.<sup>93</sup> As he rightly pointed out, this would also explain how the rebels managed to occupy the mountain without first having to attack and defeat the perioikic settlement at its base. Excavations have shown that a settlement had existed there from the geometric period onwards.<sup>94</sup> Archaeological find-

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<sup>92</sup> Some scholars have speculated that it may have lain in the neighbourhood of Thouria, see Carl Roebuck, "A History of Messenia from 369 to 146 BC" (PhD. diss., University of Chicago, 1941): 30–31; Shipley, "Messenia": 558; Shipley, *The Early Hellenistic Peloponnese*: xvii.

<sup>93</sup> Luraghi, "Der Erdbebenaufstand": 300; Luraghi, *The Ancient Messenians*: 141.

<sup>94</sup> Luraghi, *The Ancient Messenians*: 124–27; Gina Salapata, *Heroic Offerings: The Terra-cotta Plaques from the Spartan Sanctuary of Agamemnon and Cassandra* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014): 197; Kennell and Luraghi, "Laconia and Messenia": 251–52; William Cavanagh, "An Archaeology of Ancient Sparta with Reference to Laconia and Messenia," in *A Companion to Sparta*, vol. 1, ed. Anton Powell (Hoboken: Wiley, 2018): 61–92, 64; Silke Müth, *Eigene Wege. Topographie und Stadtplan von Messene in spätklassisch-hellenistischer Zeit*, Internationale Archäologie 99 (Rahden/Westfalen: Marie Leidorf, 2007): 14. *Contra* Figueira, "Thucydides, Ethnic Solidarity, and Messenian Ethnogenesis": 140.

ings show undisturbed continuity of cultic activity at several sites in the central urban area, which make the continued existence of the settlement likely,<sup>95</sup> even though later accounts of Epameinondas' founding of the new Messenian capital wholly ignore its existence.<sup>96</sup> Any polis in Spartan-controlled Messenia in the classical period must have been perioikic. The fact that ancient pro-Messenian accounts located Messenians only in various diasporic communities, and wholly ignored the continued existence of Messenian Helots and perioikoi on the ground,<sup>97</sup> easily explains the failure of our sources to mention the existence of a perioikic settlement already at the site.<sup>98</sup>

The renaming of a place because of its strong historical associations is paralleled by the case of Pylos, which under Spartan control became 'Koryphasion' (Thucydides 4.3.2): most likely because, as Robin Osborne suggested, the Spartans 'wanted to deny the Messenians a part in the heroic Greece of Nestor'.<sup>99</sup> By the same token, a different, neutral designation for the perioikic polis at the foot of Mount Ithome would make perfect sense. After the founding of independent Ithome-Messene in the fourth century, the existence of a pro-Spartan perioikic polis in this most Messenian of settings, whose inhabitants moreover were the descendants of collaborators who had failed to join the Great Revolt, was an obvious embarrassment not only to the new Messenians of 369, but perhaps even more so to their Theban patron Epameinondas, who

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<sup>95</sup> The archaeologist Silke Müth, who carried out extensive work in Messene and its environs, granted the continuity of cultic activity but was reluctant to commit to a continuity of settlement, Müth, *Eigene Wege*: 14. Later extensive rebuilding at hellenistic and Roman Messene makes the archaeological situation on the ground very difficult to decipher.

<sup>96</sup> Both Pausanias (4.27.5) and Diodoros (15.66.1) insist that the site was uninhabited.

<sup>97</sup> Diodorus Siculus 15.66.1; Pausanias 4.26.6, 28.4–7. cf. Figueira, "The Evolution of the Messenian Identity": 219–20; Luraghi, *The Ancient Messenians*: 219–21.

<sup>98</sup> Pro-Spartan accounts, by contrast, identify only the Helots as Messenians. Isocrates 6.8, 28; Xenophon, *Hellenica* 7.4.9; Polybius 4.32.7–8. Neither side mentions the perioikoi.

<sup>99</sup> Quoted by Simon Hornblower in his *Commentary on Thucydides*, vol. 2, *Books IV-V.24* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996): 154 (hereafter *Comm.* 2). Along very similar lines, Nino Luraghi argued that 'they rejected the identification of this place with Homeric Pylos', Luraghi, *The Ancient Messenians*: 56.

had beaten the Spartans at Leuktra and now proceeded to return their ancestral homeland to the scattered Messenians.<sup>100</sup>

Luraghi himself admitted that the identification of Aithaia with Ithome-Messene assumes Thucydidean ignorance of Messenian geography,<sup>101</sup> but given the highly condensed nature of the passage in which the historiographer reports the Great Revolt (a sub-clause in a sentence that starts with Spartan assistance promised to anti-Athenian rebels in the northern island of Thasos, before the camera performs a great sweep and zooms in on Sparta, shaken by tremors and menaced by Helots, sweeps again and briefly lingers on the rebels ensconced in their mountain fastness, and then once more returns to the beleaguered Thasians<sup>102</sup>), geographical detail will not have been high on Thucydides' agenda.<sup>103</sup> I follow Luraghi in accepting as probable the hypothesis that the name of the settlement at the foot of Mount Ithome had been Aithaia during its existence as a perioikic polis, and that a proportion of its inhabitants joined in the Great Revolt.

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<sup>100</sup> Plutarch, *Moralia* 194b; see also the epitaph of Epameinondas quoted by Pausanias: Μεσσήνη δ' ἱερὴ τέκνα χρόνῳ δέχεται ('After the passage of time, holy Messene received back her children'), Pausanias 9.15.6.

<sup>101</sup> Luraghi, "Der Erdbebenaufstand": 300.

<sup>102</sup> This paragraph is a very neat Thucydidean juxtaposition of two rebellions: the Thasians who attempted to revolt from Athens and the Messenians who revolted against Sparta; two sieges (of Thasos and of Ithome); and two pleas for assistance: the Thasians called on the Spartans, who agreed but found themselves unable to follow through; while the Spartans called on the Athenians to storm the Messenian stronghold on Ithome and then sent them away again. I believe that Thucydides' prime interest here was the juxtaposition of the two revolts, and very much not geographical detail. On Thucydidean juxtapositions see Hornblower, *Comm.* 2: 217.

<sup>103</sup> Thucydides did comment on the renaming of Pylos to Koryphasion, but this was the site of decisive action during the Peloponnesian War which he reported at length; while Ithome no longer played a role in his account.

## The Question of Motive

If we accept the identification of Aithaia with the polis at the foot of Mount Ithome, we also have a possible answer to the question of motive, i.e. why some of the perioikoi decided to throw in their lot with the insurgent Helots. The answer to this question is by no means self-evident, when other perioikic poleis in the region decided to remain loyal to Sparta (and, presumably, sent contingents to fight the rebels). The explanation usually given or tacitly assumed by scholars is that it was their Messenian ethnic identity that caused the rebellious perioikoi to stand with their enserfed compatriots and against the conquering Spartans.<sup>104</sup> Perhaps that Messenian identity had remained particularly strong in the shadow of Mount Ithome.

But what about Thouria? Its sanctuary of Pohoidan-Poseidon was also of venerable antiquity, but it had no specifically Messenian connotation. If the Thourians felt so strongly about their old ethnic identity that it drove them to revolt, why not the perioikoi of, say, Kyparissos or Kalamai or Aulon? The answer might lie in an accident of geography. We do not know where the revolt started, but there are a few geographical markers in our sources: in addition to Thouria and Aithaia, these are Mount Ithome and the Stenyklaros plain. ‘Stenyklaros’ was the name given in antiquity to the upper Pamisos valley.<sup>105</sup> In other words, all of those places lie along the river valley, the most fertile agricultural land in Messenia where the majority of the Spartan estates, tilled by Helots, were presumably located.<sup>106</sup> So the uprising may have started, and then spread, in this valley where large numbers of Messenian Helots lived and toiled. After an initial period of open battles between rebels and Lakedaimonians, the rebels entrenched themselves on Mount Ithome.

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<sup>104</sup> See for example Shipley, “Messenia”: 548.

<sup>105</sup> Ephoros *apud* Strabon 8.4.7 = *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 70 F 116; cf. Kennell and Luraghi, “Laconia and Messenia”: 248.

<sup>106</sup> This has so far not been backed up by archaeological findings for the Pamisos valley, but the remains of two large building complexes plausibly interpreted as Spartan estates have been found in the neighbouring Soulima Valley, see Kennell and Luraghi, “Laconia and Messenia”: 253.

All of this happened over a period of several years, and the reality on the ground will have been a lot messier than my simple summary. For a while, both Helots and perioikic volunteers not just ‘from Thouria and Aithaia’, but from a number of places around Messenia, may have joined the uprising. Over the years, as the siege dragged on and there was no easy end in sight, a number of the perioikoi, feeling perhaps that they had more to lose by throwing in their lot with the Helots, and, importantly, more to gain from loyalty to Sparta, may have reconsidered and changed sides. Others will have stayed on, and eventually left with the other rebels to settle in Naupaktos as the Free Messenians.<sup>107</sup>

Those who stayed behind had to find ways to explain their actions and decisions.<sup>108</sup> Perhaps after the dust had settled, ‘Thouria and Aithaia’, the two poleis that were geographically closest to most of the fighting, came to stand in for the perioikoi who had joined the rebels. The Spartans – and possibly even more so the loyal perioikoi – may have singled them out afterwards as handy scapegoats, not only because they lay closest to the action, but also because their inhabitants did not have a founding tale that enabled them to point to origins elsewhere. Their Messenicity would have made it easier to lump these perioikoi in collectively with ‘the descendants of the old Messenians who had been enslaved’ (οἱ τῶν παλαιῶν Μεσσηνίων τότε δουλωθέντων ἀπόγονοι, Thucydides 1.101.2) – enabling the ‘loyalists’ to stress their own faithfulness and so evade having to pay the cost of revolt.

## 2. *‘The Kytherians bore arms against the Lakedaimonians’* (Thucydides 5.57.6)

In 424, eight years into the Peloponnesian War, a fleet of sixty Athenian ships sailed against the island of Kythera off the south coast of the Peloponnese. The island’s inhabitants were not only perioikoi, but the descendants of Lakedaimonian colonists (Thucydides 7.57.6). Despite

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<sup>107</sup> For the coexistence of collusion and resistance in dependent groups see also Winnebeck et al., “The Analytical Concept of Asymmetrical Dependency”: 18.

<sup>108</sup> Luraghi speaks of ‘processes of ascription and redefinition’ for those of the Thourians who remained in Messenia (*The Ancient Messenians*: 31); and see his illuminating discussion of the Thourians’ fluctuating ethnic identity over the centuries at *ibid.* 31–36.



this fact, they put up only brief resistance before arranging terms with the Athenians. The island was enrolled in Athens' Delian League: it agreed to pay tribute and almost a decade later even sent a detachment of ships to fight with Athens against the Peloponnesian side in the Sicilian expedition in 413. It very likely did not come back under Spartan control until 409. The Kytherians, unlike the perioikoi of Thouria and Aithaia, did not set out to revolt. Their actions lie in a grey area between coercion and insubordination.

## A Brief History of Kythera

The island of Kythera lies some ten kilometres off the south-eastern tip of the Peloponnese.<sup>109</sup> Its existence as a perioikic part of Lakonikē is just one episode in its long history. In myth, this was where Aphrodite made her first landfall before the waves swept her onwards to Cyprus (Hesiod, *Theogony* 192–93). Kythera already had (probably trade) contacts with Egypt and Sumer in the second half of the third millennium, even before Minoan Crete established a colony there.<sup>110</sup> This early history was probably forgotten over time, but not the fact that Kythera had been part of the wider world across the sea: Herodotos tells us that it was the Phoenicians who brought to the island the cult of Aphrodite Ourania, a goddess who bore arms just like her counterpart in Cyprus (Herodotos 1.105.3).<sup>111</sup> By the sixth century, Kythera had come into the

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<sup>109</sup> Shipley, "Lakedaimon": 583.

<sup>110</sup> George Huxley, "The History and Topography of Ancient Kythera," in *Kythera: Excavations and Studies Conducted by the University of Pennsylvania Museum and the British School at Athens*, ed. Nicolas Coldstream and George Huxley, 2nd ed. (London: The British School at Athens, 2001): 33–40, 33 and 38–39; Cyprian Broodbank, "Kythera Survey: Preliminary Report on the 1998 Season," *Annual of the British School at Athens* 94 (1999): 191–214, 193.

<sup>111</sup> Although the presence of one (and possibly two) armed statues of Aphrodite at Sparta might more likely show Spartan influence: Pausanias explicitly mentions a wooden statue of armed Aphrodite at Sparta (3.15.10), as well as a temple of Aphrodite Areia (3.17.5) with another ancient cult image.

Laconian orbit,<sup>112</sup> but continued to be well connected:<sup>113</sup> in Thucydides' time, the island was a hub for merchant ships arriving from Libya and Egypt (Thucydides 4.53.3). Another flourishing trade was the production of purple dye, most of which presumably went for lucrative export, although some was used for the famous red cloaks favoured by the Lakedaimonians (Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lakedaimonians* 11.3). Herodotos reports that before it became Lakedaimonian in the mid-sixth century, Kythera had been Argive (Herodotos 1.82.2).<sup>114</sup> At an unknown point in time (possibly in the late seventh or early sixth century) the Lakedaimonians settled colonists there (Thucydides 7.52.5),<sup>115</sup> as they

<sup>112</sup> Dimitris Sourlas, “Τὰ δὲ Κύθηρα νῆσός ἐστιν, ἐπίκειται δὲ τῇ Λακωνικῇ κατὰ Μαλέαν”. Τα γλυπτά των Κυθήρων και η μαρτυρία τους για την ιστορία και τις σχέσεις του νησιού,” in *Το αρχαιολογικό έργο στην Πελοπόννησο (ΑΕΠΕΑ 1). Πρακτικά του Διεθνούς Συνεδρίου. Τρίπολη, 7–11 Νοεμβρίου 2*, ed. Eleni Zimi, Anna Vassiliki Karapanagiotou and Maria Xanthopoulou (Kalamata: Πανεπιστήμιο Πελοποννήσου/University of the Peloponnese, 2018): 467–82, 473; Dimitris Sourlas, “Archaic Sculptures from Kythera,” in *Neue Funde archaischer Plastik aus griechischen Heiligtümern und Nekropolen, Akten des Internationalen Symposium in Athen, 2.–3. November 2007*, ed. Georgia Kokkorou-Alevras and Wolf-Dietrich Niemeier (Munich: Hirmer, 2012): 85–88 and 93 in 83–99. The fact that the fortification walls around the island’s main polis, also named Kythera, have been dated to the archaic period may indicate some contention over control over the island; cf. Gely Fragou and Evangelos Kroustalis, “Săpăturile de pe acropola așezării Paleokastro din insula Kythera, Grecia: investigarea relațiilor dintre așezare și cimitir/Excavations on the Acropolis of Paliocastro on the Island of Kythera, Greece: Investigating the Relationship between the Settlement and the Cemetery,” *Isztros* 22, no. 1 (2016): 111–30: 117.

<sup>113</sup> This is also evidenced by the silver stater from the Cycladic island of Seriphos, dated to the last quarter of the sixth century, which was found in a coin hoard on the island (Inventory of Greek Coin Hoards, no. 4); cf. Sourlas, “Τὰ δὲ Κύθηρα νῆσός ἐστιν”:  
473–74.

<sup>114</sup> The historicity of this account has not been accepted by all scholars. It was accepted by Maria Fragoulaki (*Kinship in Thucydides*: 152 n. 71) and rejected outright by Sourlas (“Τὰ δὲ Κύθηρα νῆσός ἐστιν”:  
468). Cartledge (*Sparta and Lakonia*: 106) and Malkin (*Myth and Territory in the Spartan Mediterranean*: 83) were sceptical. Undecided: Huxley, “The History and Topography of Ancient Kythera”:  
37; A. John Graham, *Colony and Mother City in Ancient Greece* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1964): 96.

<sup>115</sup> Recent excavations of the island’s main town, also called Kythera in antiquity (modern Paliokastro), point to a major expansion after ca. 730 BCE, Fragou and Kroustalis, “Excavations on the Acropolis of Paliocastro”:  
119. Excavators of the Kythera Island Project, which carries out intense surveys of the island but unfortunately has so far only published preliminary reports, found evidence that seems to point to a major classical expansion both of general settlement and of specialized activities such as metalworking and tile production, see Broodbank, “Kythera Survey”:  
209–10 and 213; Kira Hopkins, “Territory and State Formation in the Archaic Peloponnese. A Survey-

did on other Aegean islands such as Melos (Herodotos 8.48, Thucydides 5.84.2, 89) and Knidos (Herodotos 1.174.2).<sup>116</sup> Unlike those more distant islands, Kythera was not only settled, but made part of Lakonikē: it became perioikic.

Even so, the insularity of the place – which in the premodern world meant its cosmopolitan and well-connected nature in a far-flung maritime network<sup>117</sup> – seems to have caused unease: especially to a land-based power like Sparta, Kythera must always have appeared risk as much as boon. Its rich trade and comparatively exposed position at ‘the Aegean and Mediterranean crossroads’<sup>118</sup> caused the Spartans to post a garrison of hoplites (relieved annually) to the island and ‘always devote great attention to it’, because as long as it was securely guarded, Kythera served to shield Laconia from piracy and other maritime attacks (Thucydides 4.53.2–3).<sup>119</sup> The Spartans also sent out an annual mag-

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Based Approach to the Study of Power and Society” (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 2020): 229. Irad Malkin similarly argued that the colonisation happened ‘relatively tard’ (Irad Malkin, “Colonisation Spartiate dans la Mer Egée. Tradition et Archéologie,” *Revue des Études Anciennes* 95 [1993]: 365–81, 380; see also Malkin, *Myth and Territory in the Spartan Mediterranean*: 82). By contrast, Maria Fragoulaki proposed Spartan colonisation already in the eighth century: Maria Fragoulaki, “The Mytho-Political Map of Spartan Colonisation in Thucydides. The ‘Spartan Colonial Triangle’ vs. the ‘Spartan Mediterranean,’” in *Thucydides and Sparta*, ed. Anton Powell and Paula Debnar (Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales, 2020): 183–219, 190.

<sup>116</sup> For both purported and actual Spartan colonies in the Aegean, see Cartledge, *Sparta and Lakonia*: 88–112; Malkin, *Myth and Territory in the Spartan Mediterranean*: 67–114; Fragoulaki, *Kinship in Thucydides*: 140–200 and on Kythera specifically, 151–59; Fragoulaki, “The Mytho-Political Map of Spartan Colonisation”: 190–96.

<sup>117</sup> Kythera’s island nature is stressed by Dimitris Sourlas: ‘η αμφισημία μεταξύ της ταυτότητας και της ετερότητας, της αυτονομίας και της ετερονομίας, της απομόνωσης και της επικοινωνίας, χαρακτηρίζουν τη φύση των νησιών.’ (Sourlas, “Τὰ δὲ Κύθηρα νῆσός ἐστιν”: 467). See also Maria Fragoulaki, *Kinship in Thucydides*: 155 with n. 93. Christy Constantakopoulou defined islands as both connected and isolated – ‘distinct “closed worlds”’ and as ‘parts of a complex reality of interaction in the Aegean Sea.’ Christy Constantakopoulou, *The Dance of the Islands. Insularity, Networks, the Athenian Empire and the Aegean World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): 2.

<sup>118</sup> Fragou and Kroustalis, “Excavations on the Acropolis of Paliocastro”: 111.

<sup>119</sup> The garrison is probably best understood as a stationary equivalent of one of the mobile ‘surveillance units’ (φρουραί, *phrourai*) which the Spartans deployed throughout Lakonikē in times of war (Thucydides 4.56.1–2; 4.57.2–3; Xenophon, *Hellenica* 6.5.24, 7.1.25; Diodorus Siculus 12.65.9); with Kahrstedt, *Griechisches Staatsrecht*: 72 n. 1; Herbert William Parke, “The Evidence for Harmosts in Laconia,” *Hermathena* 21, no. 46 (1931): 31–38, 35; Ducat, “The Perioikoi”: 606.

istrate, the uniquely named<sup>120</sup> κυθηροδίκης, *kytherodikēs* (Thucydides 5.53.1), a title that roughly translates as ‘the justice of (or for) Kythera’. His precise duties are unknown. Some commentators assumed that magistrate and garrison belonged together, and took *kytherodikēs* to be merely a peculiar designation of the garrison commander.<sup>121</sup> However, Maria Fragoulaki more plausibly pointed to a parallel case of officials with a singular title being sent out from a mother city to a nearby colony, namely the ἐπιδημιουργοί, *epidēmiourgoí* sent annually from Corinth to Potidaia (Thucydides 1.56.2),<sup>122</sup> and argued that the annual sending out of *kytherodikēs* and *epidēmiourgoí* signalled the intention of both mother cities to retain contact with and control over their colonies.<sup>123</sup> The word δίκη, *dikē* (custom, right, judgement, justice, trial) also hints rather at a judicial sphere of activity.<sup>124</sup> Jean Ducat suggested that its holder ‘was to keep a close eye on what happened within the Kytherian community’, and that he had ‘sovereign power over all important trials.’<sup>125</sup> In this – in

<sup>120</sup> The office is not otherwise attested before it was revived in the second century CE, see Hornblower, *Comm.* 2: 214.

<sup>121</sup> Examples include Georg Busolt, *Griechische Geschichte bis zur Schlacht bei Chaeroneia*, vol. III.2, *Der Peloponnesische Krieg*, 2nd ed. (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1967): 1126 n. 4; Kahrstedt, *Griechisches Staatsrecht*: 73; Johannes Touloumakos, “Δικασται = Judges?” *Historia* 18, no. 4 (1969): 407–21, 412; and Irad Malkin, who described Kythera as ‘une cité gouvernée directement depuis Sparte par des kytherodikai (gouverneurs de Cythère) Spartiates annuels’, Malkin, “Colonisation Spartiate dans la Mer Egée”: 379. Most recently, Carlos Villafane Silva suggested that ‘he was some sort of overseer’ who ‘might have been a military commander, like a harmost’, Villafane Silva, “The Perioikoi”: 29–30.

<sup>122</sup> Fragoulaki, *Kinship in Thucydides*: 153.

<sup>123</sup> Fragoulaki, “The Mytho-Political Map of Spartan Colonisation”: 194.

<sup>124</sup> So also Eduard Meyer, *Theopomps Hellenica* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1909): 264 n. 3; MacDowell, *Spartan Law*: 30; Masato Furuyama, “キュテラト キュテロディケス [Kythera and Kytherodikēs],” *Journal of Kokugakuin University* 國學院雜誌 109, no. 6 (2008): 1–10, 4; Ducat, “The Perioikoi”: 607; Fragou and Kroustalis, “Excavations on the Acropolis of Paliocastro”: 116; César Fornis, *Estabilidad y conflicto civil en la guerra del Peloponeso. Las sociedades corintia y argiva* (Oxford: BAR, 1999): 54; Fornis, “Conón entre Persia y Atenas (394–391 a.C.),” *Dialogues d’histoire ancienne* 34, no. 2 (2008): 33–64, 39. Dimitris Sourlas connected the *kytherodikēs* to Tolmides’ occupation of Kythera in 456: “Τὰ δὲ Κύθηρα νῆσός ἔστιν”: 469.

<sup>125</sup> Ducat, “The Perioikoi”: 607. Masato Furuyama proposed that the *kytherodikēs* supported the Spartan garrison in a legal capacity by ruling in disputes that arose between the garrison and the local population (Furuyama, “キュテラト キュテロディケス [Kythera and Kytherodikēs]”: 3). Barbara Wallner, perhaps more plausibly, suggested that the Spartans felt this singular office to be necessary, ‘höchwahrscheinlich

my opinion most plausible – scenario, the Spartan official would have had no connection with the garrison, whose duty it was most likely to keep the peace in the busy international port, and above all to guard this outpost of Sparta against incursion. In this, they were not altogether successful.

## First and Second Capture of Kythera

In 456/5, during the First Peloponnesian War, the Athenian general Tolmides circumnavigated the Peloponnese. His main intention seems to have been to demonstrate Athens' reach to its enemies: he ravaged coastal settlements and their agricultural hinterland and burnt down the Lakedaimonian dockyards. He also captured the wealthy perioikic settlement of Boia(i) on the southern coast and nearby Kythera, notwithstanding its hoplite garrison; even though he does not seem to have held either of them for long.<sup>126</sup>

Thirty years after Tolmides, in 424, three Athenian generals followed in his wake. Probably inspired by Athens' successful capture and fortification of the island of Sphakteria near Pylos on the west coast of Messenia in the previous year, a fleet of sixty ships carrying a force of

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[wegen] der exponierten Lage der Insel'; she pointed to parallels with Roman magistrates sent to more distant *municipiae* and *coloniae* (Wallner, *Die Perioiken*: 270–71). Graham Shipley described Kythera as being 'administered by' the *kytherodikēs* in a form of direct rule from Sparta (Shipley, "Lakedaimon": 583). In a similar vein, Christel Müller recently argued that the *kytherodikēs* was 'a clear encroachment on internal affairs', Christel Müller, "How (Not) to Be a Citizen: Subordination and Participation of the Perioikoi in Hellenistic Sparta (and Elsewhere)," in *Politeia and Koinōnia. Studies in Ancient Greek History in Honour of Josine Blok*, ed. Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge and Marek Węcowski, Mnemosyne Supplements 471 (Leiden: Brill, 2023): 65–88, 71.

<sup>126</sup> Thucydides reports the assault made on the Peloponnesian coasts (1.108.4–5) without mention of Kythera; we learn about Tolmides' capture of the perioikic settlements of Boia(i) and Kythera from Pausanias (τῶν perioίκων Βοιάς εἶλε καὶ τὴν Κυθηρίων νῆσον, 1.27.5) and from the scholiast on Aischines (Schol. Aischines 2.75), the latter being 'generally a good authority' according to Arnold Gomme, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, vol. 1, *Introduction and Commentary on Book I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1945): 320.

over two thousand hoplites<sup>127</sup> set out from Athens in the early summer of 424 to do the same at Kythera. Its leaders were Nikias, son of Nikeratos; Nikostratos, son of Dieitrephe; and Autokles, son of Tolmaios (Thucydides 4.53.1). The Athenians captured the port of Skandeia and proceeded to a two-pronged attack on the island's main town, also called Kythera (modern-day Palaiokastros), roughly one mile or 1.8 kilometres inland (ten stades: Pausanias 3.23.1). The Kytherians came out to meet the invaders 'in full force' (ἔστρατοπεδευμένους ἅπαντας, Thucydides 4.54.1), but turned and fled after only a brief battle. Thucydides makes no mention here of the Spartan garrison, indicating that it was no longer in residence. Paul Cartledge explained its 'conspicuous [...] absence from the narrative' by taking up a (plausible, to my mind) suggestion first put forward by Georg Busolt, namely that the garrison had been withdrawn from the island 'to forestall a repetition of the Pylos débâcle'.<sup>128</sup> Some Kytherians then entered into negotiations with the Athenians. As a result, the island not only accepted occupation (a resolve the Athenians strengthened by stationing their own garrison there and interning some

<sup>127</sup> Thucydides initially mentions sixty Athenian ships and two thousand hoplites, 'and a few riders and some of their Milesian and other allies' (ἱππεῦσί τε ὀλίγοις καὶ τῶν ζυμμάχων Μιλησίου καὶ ἄλλουσι τινάσ, Thucydides 4.53.1). Later, in the description of the attack on the harbour of Skandeia, there are only ten ships but an additional two thousand Milesian hoplites (4.54.1), which number however seems too high: in the earlier attack on Melos, sixty ships were required to carry two thousand hoplites (3.91.1). Editors of and commentators on the text have suggested alternatives. However, as Donald Kagan rightly observed, it is impossible now to arrive at the correct number; Donald Kagan, *The Archidamian War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974): 262 n. 8.

<sup>128</sup> Cartledge, *Sparta and Lakonia*: 209. Busolt further suggested that the absence of the garrison had in fact encouraged the Athenian attack. Busolt, *Griechische Geschichte III.2*: 1126. Donald Kagan disagreed, pointing out that Thucydides' 'omissions are many and hard to explain' (Kagan, *The Archidamian War*: 262). But subsequent events indirectly support this scenario: Thucydides reports that Nikias sailed up the coast from Kythera to Thyrea, a coastal perioikic settlement near Argive territory. One of the Lakedaimonian mobile 'surveillance units' in the area saw him coming but, believing itself outnumbered, cautiously withdrew. Thyrea was captured after a siege and the leader of its Spartan garrison, the Spartiate Tantalos, taken prisoner (Thucydides 4.57; cf. Diodorus Siculus 12.65.9). We might presume that even if Thucydides neglected to mention Kythera's Spartan garrison, Ephoros or another historiographer is likely to have done so had it still been there.

Kytherians on other islands<sup>129</sup>), but seems to have gone over to the Athenian side.

Kythera paid the considerable sum of four talents in tribute (Thucydides 4.57.4)<sup>130</sup> – a coup for the Athenians, who had got ‘a city which was not an ally [...] to pay tribute’, as Lisa Kallet-Marx noted.<sup>131</sup> They also used the island as a base from which to harry the nearby Laconian mainland (Thucydides 4.56). With Pylos as well as Kythera in enemy hands, it is not surprising that Lakedaimonian fears of encirclement now reached new heights (Thucydides 4.55; 5.14.3).

The island should have gone back to Sparta under the conditions of the Peace of Nikias three years later in 421 (Thucydides 5.18.7), but most likely it continued to be an Athenian ally. As late as 413, eleven full years after their initial capture by Nikias, the Kytherians fought with Athens in the Sicilian expedition against their own mother city, as Thucydides stressed: ‘the Kytherians, being a colony of the Lakedaimonians, bore arms with the Athenians against the Lakedaimonians [...].’<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Athenian garrison in Kythera: Thucydides 4.54.4, interneers: Thucydides 4.57.4.

<sup>130</sup> Kythera is not named in the extant tribute lists (Shipley, “Lakedaimon”: 584), although the island’s name is usually restored in the inscription, *Inscriptiones Graecae* I<sup>3</sup> 287 (cf. Hornblower, *Comm. 1*: 219).

<sup>131</sup> Lisa Kallet-Marx, *Money, Expense, and Naval Power in Thucydides’ History 1–5.24* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993): 160; see also Constantakopoulou, *The Dance of the Islands*: 116.

<sup>132</sup> The entire sentence runs: Ῥόδιοι δὲ καὶ Κυθήριοι Δωριῆς ἀμφοτέροι, οἱ μὲν Λακεδαιμονίων ἀποικοὶ Κυθήριοι ἐπὶ Λακεδαιμονίους τοὺς ἅμα Γυλίππῳ μετ’ Ἀθηναίων ὄπλα ἔφερον, Ῥόδιοι δὲ Ἀργεῖοι γένος Συρακοσίοις μὲν Δωριεῦσι, Γελώφιοι δὲ καὶ ἀποικοὶς ἐαυτῶν οὐσι μετὰ Συρακοσίων στρατευομένοις ἠναγκάζοντο πολεμεῖν. (Thucydides 7.57.6). In it, Thucydides contrasts the Rhodians, who had been compelled to fight (Ῥόδιοι [...] ἠναγκάζοντο πολεμεῖν), with the Kytherians, about whom he does not make a similar statement but merely remarks that, despite both Rhodians and Kytherians being Dorians, they fought on the Ionian side. I draw from this the inference that while the Kytherians fought on the ‘wrong’ side in ethnic terms, they otherwise were there of their own volition (*contra* Maria Fragoulaki, who included them among those constrained to fight with Athens against the Peloponnesians, *Kinship in Thucydides*: 152).

## How Voluntary? How Coerced?

The Kytherians clearly did not change sides entirely of their own volition, but the brief battle, the negotiations with the Athenians, and the fact that Kythera remained an ally of Athens for so long all arguably indicate the presence of pro-Athenian leanings, and so perhaps a degree of willingness, in at least a part of the citizenry.<sup>133</sup> Of course membership in Athens' Delian League could also come about under duress (cf. Thucydides 1.108.4), and so we might ask if the islanders could in fact have done more to defend themselves and their two settlements, or whether in the face of overwhelming force they simply had no other option.<sup>134</sup>

Only two years previously, there had been a very similar undertaking: an Athenian force of sixty ships with two thousand hoplites, again commanded by Nikias, had sailed to the Aegean island of Melos (which like Kythera thought of itself as a Lakedaimonian colony<sup>135</sup>) and demanded that it join the Delian League. The outcome then had been very different: the Melians, 'unwilling to submit nor to join their alliance' (οὐκ ἐθέλοντας ὑπακούειν οὐδὲ ἐς τὸ αὐτῶν ξυμμαχικὸν ἰέναι ἐβούλοντο, Thucydides 3.91.1), refused, even when the invaders proceeded to ravage their land. The Athenians, thwarted, sailed away.<sup>136</sup> Kythera is larger

<sup>133</sup> This was suggested by Paul Cartledge, *Sparta and Lakonia*: 209, and accepted by César Fornis, *Estabilidad y conflicto civil*: 54–55. There is no basis whatever for Gabriele Bockisch's sweeping assertion that the Kytherians 'sofort' ('at once') sought talks with the Athenians and handed over the island because of their 'feindliche Haltung [...] gegen die Lakedaimonier' ('hostile attitude [...] against the Lakedaimonians'), Gabriele Bockisch, "Ἀρμοσταί (431–387)," *Klio* 46 (1965): 129–239, 135.

<sup>134</sup> The latter is the conclusion drawn by Villafane Silva, "The Perioikoi": 149.

<sup>135</sup> Herodotos 4.48; Thucydides 5.64.2; Xenophon, *Hellenica* 2.2.3; Diodorus Siculus 12.65.2. The status of Melos as a Spartan colony was initially doubted by Hornblower (*Comm. 1*: 499) but later accepted by him (*Comm. 3*: 216); it was accepted cautiously by Irad Malkin (*Myth and Territory in the Spartan Mediterranean*: 74–76) and outright by Maria Fragoulaki (*Kinship in Thucydides*: 162–69; "The Mytho-Political Map of Spartan Colonisation": 184).

<sup>136</sup> As Gomme noted, this was 'a considerable force'; he added critically, 'and Nikias does little with it' (Arnold Gomme, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, vol. 2, *Books II–III* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956]: 393). Antony Andrewes later suggested that the 'real (and necessarily secret) use [of Nikias' force] was to be against the Boiotians': Arnold Gomme, Kenneth Dover and Antony Andrewes, *A Historical Commentary*



than Melos;<sup>137</sup> but Melos must have been significantly richer: after it had finally been forced into the Delian League, its very large tribute was fifteen talents.<sup>138</sup> Perhaps the Melians simply had the means to build sturdier walls<sup>139</sup> and lay in larger stores of food to resist an enemy for longer. They would famously go on, ten years later, to resist steadfastly throughout a lengthy and gruelling siege,<sup>140</sup> while continuing to hope for assistance from their mother city, Sparta (Thucydides 5.114–16).

It is worth pointing out, with Albert Brian Bosworth who very forcefully made this point, that those engaged in the talks with an Athenian embassy before the siege were not the Melian assembly, but ‘only a select few, [...] [namely] the magistrates and voting members of the Melian oligarchy.’<sup>141</sup> Thucydides explicitly says that the Melians did not take the Athenian ambassadors to speak before the assembly (Thucydides 5.84.3), probably because they (rightly) feared its pro-democratic/pro-Athenian sympathies.

There is an obvious parallel here with the situation in Kythera, which also had an oligarchic constitution.<sup>142</sup> Threatened with an Athe-

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on *Thucydides*, vol. 4, *Books V (25)-VII* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970): 156 n. 1.

<sup>137</sup> Kythera has a surface area of 262 sq km (Shipley, “Lakedaimon”: 583), compared to Melos’ 151 sq km (Gary Reger, “The Aegean,” in *An Inventory of Archaic and Classical Poleis*, ed. Mogens Herman Hansen and Thomas Heine Nielsen [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004]: 732–93, 759).

<sup>138</sup> The Melian tribute is listed in an inscription: *Inscriptiones Graecae* I<sup>3</sup> 71, col. 1 line 65; Reger, “The Aegean”: 620; Kythera’s tribute is mentioned by Thucydides at 4.57.4. Even four talents was a lot, as Simon Hornblower pointed out: ‘A large tribute, which may reflect the prosperity of Kythera through the trade in purple dye.’ Hornblower, *Comm.* 2: 219.

<sup>139</sup> I thank Jan Timmer for this suggestion.

<sup>140</sup> Michael Seaman suggested that the siege may have gone on for nearly a year, from the summer of 416 until the final surrender of the Melians in the winter of 416/5: “The Athenian Expedition to Melos in 416 BC,” *Historia* 46, no. 4 (1997): 385–418, 387 n. 11. For the importance of the Melian’s self-identification as a colony of Sparta see Fragoulaki, *Kinship in Thucydides*: 162–69; Fragoulaki, “The Mytho-Political Map of Spartan Colonisation”: 195.

<sup>141</sup> Albert Brian Bosworth, “The Humanitarian Aspect of the Melian Dialogue,” *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 113 (1993): 30–44, 33.

<sup>142</sup> We have no detailed knowledge about the internal arrangements in the perioikic poleis, but as the Lakedaimonians were known to insist on oligarchic constitutions among their allies (Thucydides 1.19), all Lakedaimonian poleis, including the perioikic ones, will also have had oligarchic governments.

nian siege, a faction of the citizens actively contacted the Athenians to arrange terms. Another parallel is the situation in Chalkidian Mende in north-eastern Greece, a polis situated on the extreme end of a peninsula which made it almost an island (Thucydides 4.120.3). In early 423, an oligarchic faction caused Mende to revolt from the Delian League and join the Spartans, but some weeks later, when the city was faced with an Athenian punitive expedition of fifty ships with several thousand heavy and light infantry (Thucydides 4.129.2), the *dēmos* (the people) opened the city's gates to the Athenians (Thucydides 4.130.4). In all of these cases the decisions were made under pressure of imminent or actual hostilities by a large Athenian force. In both Melos and Mende there was a conspicuous lack of assistance from Sparta, and if the Spartan garrison was absent from Kythera at the time of the Athenian attack, the same applied there too.<sup>143</sup>

Finally, we might ask how other perioikic settlements acted in the face of Athenian attacks. Comparison is of course difficult as Kythera was an island, while on the mainland a Peloponnesian army could have marched to relieve a besieged perioikic polis (or later reconquer it). But even so a look at Athenian attacks on coastal perioikic settlements is instructive. Just after the Athenians had taken Kythera, they went off to harry 'most of the coastal settlements' (τὰ πλεῖστα τῶν περὶ θάλασσαν), including nearby Helos and Asine on the Messenian gulf, and 'ravaged the country for about seven days' (ἐδήουν τὴν γῆν ἡμέρας μάλιστα ἑπτά,

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<sup>143</sup> Another possible parallel is the case of Kephallenia: in 431, a fleet of one hundred Athenian ships took the island without a fight (ἄνευ μάχης, Thucydides 2.30.2). There were four poleis on the island, and while one of them probably already was pro-Athenian, another had previously supported Korinth against Kerkyra, an ally of Athens (cf. Timo Stickler, *Korinth und seine Kolonien. Die Stadt am Isthmus im Mächtegefüge des klassischen Griechenland*, Klio Beihefte NF 15 [Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010]: 152). The leanings of the other two are unknown; they may have been neutral. Notably, this peaceful 'conquest' had been preceded by earlier diplomatic activities on the part of the Athenians (Thucydides 2.7.3; Diodorus Siculus 12.43.5). The Kephallenians subsequently supported Athens during the Peloponnesian War, although unlike Kythera, they did not join the Delian League (Hans-Joachim Gehrke and Eckhard Wirbelauer, "Akarnania and Adjacent Areas," in *An Inventory of Archaic and Classical Poleis. An Investigation Conducted by the Copenhagen Polis Centre for the Danish National Research Foundation*, ed. Hansen, Mogens Herman and Thomas Heine Nielsen [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004]: 351–74, 364).

Thucydides 4.54.4). There were a number of such attacks over the years, and some poleis (such as Epidauros Limera or Prasiai) suffered repeatedly.<sup>144</sup> All remained steadfastly loyal.<sup>145</sup> (Indeed as we will see below, even in 370/69 many perioikic poleis resisted the invaders.)

## Push and Pull Factors

I believe, on balance, that the island's secession was the result of a mix of push and pull factors. The factors pushing the Kytherians towards accommodation with Athens included the knowledge that once the harbour of Skandeia was in enemy hands, the city of Kythera would be without access to supplies from the sea, and so eventually starved into submission. There would have been little point in appealing to the mainland for help, even if a boat could have been sent from the besieged island: at this time the Lakedaimonians had no navy of their own.<sup>146</sup> A year earlier, the Spartans had staged a massive operation to relieve Sphakteria – an uninhabited island, much smaller than Kythera and much nearer land –, but as far as we know they remained inactive when Kythera was threatened: the Sphakteria prisoners were now held as hostages in Athens, and the Spartans' hands were tied. It is likely that the Kytherians were aware of this: they knew they were on their own.

There may also have been considerations that pulled the island towards Athens. I have above suggested that there may have been in Kythera, as there was in many poleis of the Greek world at the time, a pro-democratic (and as such, a pro-Athenian) faction. There is some support for this in a statement by Thucydides. In the chapter following his report of events on the island, he writes about Lakedaimonian fears of further Athenian incursions and, as a result, of revolt at home (Thucydides

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<sup>144</sup> For Prasiai cf. Aristophanes, *Peace* 242–43, and see Villafane Silva, “The Perioikoi”: 148.

<sup>145</sup> See the extensive list put together by Barbara Wallner, *Die Perioiken*: 238.

<sup>146</sup> They had to rely in maritime matters on their allies in the Peloponnesian League, whose support, as Carolyn Falkner noted, was ‘not automatic.’ Carolyn Falkner, “Sparta and the Sea. A History of Spartan Sea-Power, c.706 – c.373 BC” (PhD diss., University of Alberta, Edmonton 1992): 97.

4.55.1). The statement is usually taken to refer to the Helots,<sup>147</sup> but could equally well describe Spartan worries that disaffected perioikoi with pro-Athenian leanings might overthrow their oligarchic, pro-Spartan governments, establish something more akin to democratic rule, and go over to Athens. The many coastal perioikic poleis may well have contained outward-looking citizens who wished to trade and join maritime networks in (and beyond) the Aegean, rather than continue to look to landlocked Sparta.

As islanders, the Kytherians were in a more advantageous position than mainland perioikoi to seek out alternative options, both geo-strategically and in terms of their civic identity. Kythera lay near the mainland, but so did the island of Aigina, which had long been independent and a decided enemy of Athens (and indeed a member of Sparta's Peloponnesian League), despite its nearness to that city.<sup>148</sup> In its awareness of its own pre-Lakedaimonian history, we might compare Kythera to Thouria and Aithaia, some of whose citizens chose their Messenian over their perioikic identity. Some Kytherians may have felt less connected to Lakonikē, and more able to strike out on their own.<sup>149</sup>

Kythera had a previous, albeit short, Athenian 'connection': the encounter with the Athenian general Tolmides thirty years previously. He may not only have captured Kythera in 456,<sup>150</sup> but forged ties with

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<sup>147</sup> Gomme, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, vol. 3, *Books IV–V 24* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956): 510.; Hornblower, *Comm.* 2: 218; Fragoulaki, *Kinship in Thucydides*: 153. Cartledge suggested revolt by Helots or factions among the Spartiates, but not perioikoi, *Sparta and Lakonia*: 210.

<sup>148</sup> At 85.9 sq km, Aigina is considerable smaller than Kythera at 262 sq km, but Aigina's more favourable position in the Saronic Gulf and a specialisation in trade seem to have generated more wealth for the Aiginatans: Aristotle, *Politics* 1291b24, and see Thomas Figueira, "The Saronic Gulf," in *An Inventory of Archaic and Classical Poleis. An Investigation Conducted by the Copenhagen Polis Centre for the Danish National Research Foundation*, ed. Hansen, Mogens Herman and Thomas Heine Nielsen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004): 620–23, 620.

<sup>149</sup> Cf. Maria Fragoulaki, who explained the Kytherian's detachment 'from the Spartan military ethos and Sparta itself' by their wealth and their island nature, the physical distance to the Laconian mainland, and 'their status as *perioikoi*'; although she does not enlarge on this latter statement, or compare the Kytherians with their fellow perioikoi on the mainland. Fragoulaki, *Kinship in Thucydides*: 155.

<sup>150</sup> Τολμίδου: οὗτος περιπλεύσας Πελοπόννησον μετ' Ἀθηναίων εὐδοκίμησε λαμπρῶς καὶ Βοιάς καὶ Κύθηρα εἶλεν ἄρχοντος Ἀθηνησι Καλλίου. schol. Aischin. II 75 (for the year 456–55).

some of its inhabitants. We know that links of *xenia* (guest-friendship) and *proxenia*<sup>151</sup> existed between Lakedaimonians and Athenians,<sup>152</sup> and that there were ties between Lakedaimonians and other city states,<sup>153</sup> including a fifth-century *proxenos* of Argos, a long-time enemy of Sparta's, in the perioikic polis of Oinous.<sup>154</sup> Tolmides may have established some such tie with a (pro-democratic?) family of Kythera.<sup>155</sup>

Both Tolmides and one of the leaders of the 424 expedition, Autokles, had a father called Tolmaios. This rare name<sup>156</sup> makes it likely that the two men were related.<sup>157</sup> When the Athenians returned to the island three decades after Tolmides, they may have encountered there some Kytherians who pointed to their island's hereditary tie to one of the

<sup>151</sup> A *proxenos* represented the interests and aided the citizens of another polis, roughly comparable to the duties of a modern honorary consul. For proxy in Sparta see Lukas Thommen, *Die Wirtschaft Spartas* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2014): 58; for perioikoi as *proxenoi* of other poleis see Ducat, "The Perioikoi": 597. For the phenomenon of proxy more generally see now William Mack, *Proxeny and Polis. Institutional Networks in the Ancient Greek World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

<sup>152</sup> Examples include Alkibiades of Athens who was hereditary *xenos* (guest-friend) of the ephor Endios of Sparta (Thucydides 8.6.3) and the Spartan king Archidamos, who was a guest-friend of Perikles of Athens (Plutarch, *Pericles* 33.2). For guest-friendship in Sparta see Hodkinson, *Property and Wealth*: 335–52; Sarah Humphreys, *Kinship in Ancient Athens: An Anthropological Analysis*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018): 501–3; and see now Polly Low, "Xenia and Proxenia in Thucydides' Sparta," in *Thucydides and Sparta*, ed. Anton Powell and Paula Debnar (Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales, 2021): 163–82.

<sup>153</sup> Kimon famously was *proxenos* of the Lakedaimonians (Plutarch, *Kimon* 14.3), while the Spartan Athenaios (!) was *proxenos* of the Athenians (Thucydides 4.119), to name just two examples.

<sup>154</sup> *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* 13.239, dated to 470; see Pierre Charneau, "Inscriptions d'Argos," *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 77 (1953): 395–97 in 387–403; Lilian H. Jeffery, *The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961): 169 no. 22; Cartledge, *Sparta and Lakonia*: 185; Catling, "The Survey Area": 239. For Oinous see Shipley, "Lakedaimon": 584–85.

<sup>155</sup> A *xenia* could come about even during hostilities, such as in the case of king Kleomenes I of Sparta, who is reported to have become the guest-friend of the Athenian Isagoras during the Lakedaimonian siege of Athens in 510: Herodotos 5.70.1.

<sup>156</sup> The *Lexicon of Greek Personal Names* database only lists three Athenians bearing that name in the fifth century: <https://search.lgpn.ox.ac.uk/browse.html?field=names&sort=nymRef&query=%CE%A4%CE%BF%CE%BB%CE%BC%CE%B1%E1%BF%96%CE%BF%CF%82&collection=&facet-region=Attica&start=1&facet-century=-5> [accessed 15.04.2024].

<sup>157</sup> With John Kenyon Davies, *Athenian Propertied Families, 600–300 BC* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971): 75; Cartledge, *Sparta and Lakonia*: 208; Humphreys, *Kinship in Ancient Athens*: 512 and 1201.

Athenian generals, Autokles, son of Tolmaios (a nephew of Tolmides, perhaps).<sup>158</sup> With a large force of Athenians outside their gates concentrating minds, they may have persuaded enough of their fellow citizens to go and offer parley to the Athenians. Alternatively, a group of Kytherians may simply have acted off their own bat.<sup>159</sup>

Kythera continued to be an ally of Athens for a decade and a half. It returned to Spartan control probably in 409, the same year as Pylos-Sphakteria.<sup>160</sup> We know nothing at all about this process: what did the Kytherians think of it? Did they return unwillingly and only under pressure? Or had Athens' catastrophic defeat in Sicily thinned the ranks of pro-democrats, perhaps caused general disenchantment with Athens? Perhaps the Kytherians, like so many others in the Delian League, had grown tired of paying and fighting for Athens; if so, they may have been relieved to be Lakedaimonians once more.

## The Third Capture of Kythera

Another decade and a half later, the Athenians were back: this time in the company of the Persians. In 393, the year after Sparta's disastrous naval defeat at the battle of Knidos, the Athenian general Konon and the powerful satrap Pharnabazos, who had already expelled Spartan garrisons from several of the Cycladic islands, landed on Kythera with a large fleet, and history proceeded to repeat itself. Xenophon reports that 'those who held the polis of the Kytherians, fearing that it would be taken by force, left its walls' (οἱ ἔχοντες τὴν πόλιν τῶν Κυθηρίων φοβηθέντες

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<sup>158</sup> A possible descendant is another Autokles, a decided democrat (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 6.3.2, 7), whose father Strombichides was killed during the extreme oligarchic regime of the Thirty (Lysias 13.13 and 30; 30.14); see Davies, *Athenian Propertied Families*: 161–62; Humphreys, *Kinship in Ancient Athens*: 764.

<sup>159</sup> As would happen some years later in Byzantium. In 408, the city – an ally of Sparta – was besieged by the Athenians, and eventually a small group of Byzantines opened the gates to the enemy. When one of them was later tried at Sparta for treason, he argued that he had not betrayed his city but saved it, because the women and children were dying of starvation. The Spartans acquitted him (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 1.3.19–20; Plutarch, *Alcibiades* 31.6).

<sup>160</sup> Huxley, "The History and Topography of Ancient Kythera": 38.

μὴ κατὰ κράτος ἀλοῖεν ἐξέλιπον τὰ τείχη, Xenophon, *Hellenica* 4.8.8). They were allowed to leave for the mainland. ‘Those who held the polis of the Kytherians’ may have been the garrison, but I believe that it more probably refers to the pro-Spartan oligarchs who had until then ‘held Kythera’ since their return to power after 409.<sup>161</sup> This would chime with Diodorus’ assertion that ‘the Kytherians were sent away to Lakonikē under a truce’ (τοὺς μὲν Κυθηρίους ὑποσπόνδους ἐξέπεμψαν εἰς τὴν Λακωνικὴν, Diodorus Siculus 14.84.5). The scenario in Kythera would be a repeat, on a much smaller scale, of the democratic revolution in Rhodes (which also of course involved Konon) just three years earlier (Diodorus Siculus 14.79.5; Pausanias 6.7.6). Pharnabazos repaired the walls of the town (had they been damaged in the assault, or allowed to fall into disrepair?) and installed a garrison of his own – commanded, so Xenophon tells us, by the Athenian Nikophemos as harmost (Νικόφημον Ἀθηναῖον ἄρμοστήν, Xenophon, *Hellenica* 4.8.8). The island served once more as a base for attacks on the Laconian mainland (Plutarch, *Agessilaus* 23.1; Isoc. 4.119), although we do not know any details. Indeed, that is all we know about the second Athenian occupation.

Kythera was most likely handed back under the King’s Peace in 387/6. It was certainly back under Spartan control in 371, when the ephor Antalkidas sent his children there to safety during the invasion of Laconia (Plutarch, *Agessilaus* 32.1). A single, tantalising fragment indicates that Aristotle wrote a treatise about the constitution of Kythera,<sup>162</sup> which indicates that the island achieved (or had thrust upon it) autonomy in the fourth century – perhaps after the Spartan defeat at Leuctra, or as part of Philip II’s rearrangement of Greece after his victory at Chaironeia in 338.

<sup>161</sup> Ernst Badian pointed out that ἔχειν ‘quite frequently (though not invariably) refers to possession of a place that is implied to be temporary, or at least military and based on force.’ Badian, *From Plataea to Potidaea*: 165, see also his discussion of the term on p. 166. The Spartan garrison may once more have been pre-emptively withdrawn by the Spartans; cf. Cartledge, *Sparta and Lakonia*: 242.

<sup>162</sup> Heraclides Lembus 54 = Aristotle, fragment no. 88 (Gigon). Cf. Shipley, “Lake-daimon”: 583, Ducat, “The Perioikoi”: 596.

## Spartan Reactions

There is no mention at all in the sources of how the Spartans might have reacted. Perhaps some of the men held to be responsible for surrendering the island were tried<sup>163</sup> and exiled or executed. But while Spartan harmosts – the military governors infamously installed in conquered territories outside the Peloponnese from the last quarter of the fifth century onwards – in allied and/or occupied cities ruthlessly executed democratic leaders and exiled pro-Athenians, we hear nothing about exiled Kytherians, who would surely have surfaced in Athens or accompanied a general, as the exiled Messenians did Konon (Hellenica Oxyrhynchia 15.3; Diodorus Siculus 13.48.6; Pausanias 4.26.2).

The only possible hint at punitive action occurs in a very late source: an entry in the tenth-century CE Byzantine encyclopaedia known as the Suda reports that ‘the Kytherians were enslaved by the Lakedaimonians’ at some point in the 420s.<sup>164</sup> We know the identity of one of those Kytherians: the poet Philoxenos, who was sold into slavery as a boy. His biographer recently suggested that his enslavement was part of the punishment meted out to those elite families who had made contact with the Athenians.<sup>165</sup> However, most editors of the Suda have emended ‘Lakedaimonians’ to ‘Athenians’, assuming that the enslaving of the Kytherians happened during the Athenian attack. The most likely occasion for this would have been when the island port of Skandeia was conquered (Thucydides 4.54.1), which may well have involved the enslavement and sale of the women and children captured. While I believe that the latter scenario is on balance more likely, it seems to me overall that a

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<sup>163</sup> As Anaxilaos of Byzantium was after he had opened his city’s gates to the Athenians in 408; see above n. 159).

<sup>164</sup> ἀνδραποδισθέντων τῶν Κυθῆρων ὑπὸ Λακεδαιμονίων, Suda s.v. Φιλόξενος = Adler Phi 393. The entry contains a potted biography of the poet Philoxenos of Kythera, who it says was sold into slavery and educated (ἐπαιδεύθη) by the poet Melanippides. Philoxenos was born in 435/4 (*Inscriptiones Graecae* 13.5.444, line 69), so the enslaving of the Kytherians must have happened in the 420s, while he was still a boy or young teenager. See the recent, thorough discussion of the sources in Adelaide Fongoni, *Philoxeni Cytherii Testimonia et Fragmenta*, Dithyrambographi Graeci 1 (Pisa: Fabrizio Serra Editore, 2014): 13–15 and 43–44.

<sup>165</sup> Fongoni, *Philoxeni Cytherii Testimonia et Fragmenta*: 14–15.



single entry in an encyclopaedia compiled almost a millennium and a half after the events under discussion, and moreover one capable of being read in two diametrically opposed ways, is simply too slender to support either hypothesis.

I suggest that the Spartans made a strategic decision to overlook the first secession of perioikic Kythera for political reasons: by the time the island returned to their control, a new naval front had opened in the Peloponnesian War and the landlocked Spartans required naval resources. In 412, the year following Athens' disastrous Sicilian expedition, there were massive preparations across the Greek world for a final, decisive effort to decide the Peloponnesian War. Several Aegean islands and coastal poleis formerly part of the Athenian empire (Euboia, Chios, Lesbos, and Erythrai) had openly revolted and come over to the Lakedaimonian side. The war now moved into the Aegean. By 409, when Kythera returned (or was returned) to the fold, the Athenians had recaptured most of the Aegean islands and secured the Bosporos. The new sea-going Lakedaimonians must have been eager once more to hold the island that not only controlled their access to the Aegean, but also was experienced in matters maritime and probably had its own wharves for building and repairing ships, as well as inhabitants with ties across the Mediterranean and undoubtedly the Aegean as well. If, as I have argued, the pro-Athenian faction on Kythera had by this time lost traction, the pro-Spartan camp would have regained control and smoothed the way for a reconciliation with the metropolis – perhaps reminding the Spartans of their mutual ties of *syngeneia*.<sup>166</sup> I believe that during this decisive period of the Peloponnesian War, the only island polis that was part of the Lakedaimonian state was simply too useful for the Spartans to wish to alienate its citizens.

But there are some indications that another decade and a half later, after the second secession, the Lakedaimonians took stronger measures. By 387, Kythera had twice been under enemy occupation for long stretches of time, had fought with Athens against the Peloponnesians,

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<sup>166</sup> 'Colonization created *syngeneia*, and this "replicative" colonial ethnogenesis constituted a major form of ethnicity.' Figueira, "Thucydides, Ethnic Solidarity, and Mesenian Ethnogenesis": 119.

and had most latterly hosted Athenian garrisons under the command of Athenian commanders.<sup>167</sup> Eduard Meyer argued that the Spartans, when they finally got it back, are likely to have regarded and treated the island as conquered enemy territory,<sup>168</sup> for a time at least. As a punitive and precautionary measure (after the horse had run away, twice), they may even have downgraded the Kytherians from perioikic citizens to inhabitants of conquered territory.

There is, however, a problem. Meyer developed his otherwise plausible argument on the grounds of an inscription found in Kythera which mentions a harmost (*Inscriptiones Graecae* V 1.937). The inscription has been variously dated to the fourth or third centuries.<sup>169</sup> Meyer dated it to the mid-fourth century and took it as evidence for the presence of a governor posted to the island soon after 387.<sup>170</sup> But the inscription includes not only text, but also an image, and this has recently been more convincingly dated to the hellenistic period on stylistic grounds.<sup>171</sup> (I will

<sup>167</sup> Pointing to a number of finds which show strong Athenian influence or may even be Athenian imports, the archaeologist Dimitris Sourlas argued that close ties between Kythera and Athens probably continued throughout the fourth century; Sourlas, “Τὰ δὲ Κύθηρα νησός ἐστιν”: 469–70, with fig. 2. This is an attractive conclusion, but it should be treated with caution. The presence of imported foreign goods need not necessarily imply political ties in an island of ‘international’ traders. Fifth-century Attic pottery has also been found at Gytheion, also a port: Cartledge, *Sparta and Lakonia*: 226, with references.

<sup>168</sup> Meyer, *Theopomps Hellenica*: 263–64: ‘wie die übrigen Glieder des attischen Machtbereiches’ (‘like the other parts of the Athenian empire’). This assessment was accepted by Herbert William Parke, “The Evidence for Harmosts in Laconia,” *Hermathena* 21, no. 46 (1931): 31–38, 35; Graham, *Colony and Mother City*: 96; and recently Kulesza, “Citizenship and the Spartan Kosmos”: 211–12.

<sup>169</sup> Fourth century: MacDowell, *Spartan Law*: 30; Shipley, “Lakedaimon”: 584; Villafane Silva, “The Perioikoi”: 60; Kulesza, “Citizenship and the Spartan Kosmos”: 211; first half of the fourth century: Meyer, *Theopomps Hellenica*: 262; mid-fourth century: Charles Michel, *Recueil d’inscriptions grecques* (Brussels: Lamertin, 1900): 828 no. 1078; mid-fourth to early third century: Parke, “The Evidence for Harmosts”: 35; late fourth to early third century: Sourlas, “Τὰ δὲ Κύθηρα νησός ἐστιν”: 470 n. 31; Fragou and Kroustalis, “Excavations on the Acropolis of Paliocastro”: 117; third century: Hans Ackermann and John Boardman, eds., *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, vol. 3.1 (Zurich: Artemis, 1986): 574 (henceforth: *LIMC*); Michael Schäfer, *Griechische Dioskurenreliefs* (in preparation): cat. no. 12.

<sup>170</sup> Meyer, *Theopomps Hellenica*: 262.

<sup>171</sup> Michael Schäfer, who is preparing a monograph on depictions of the Dioskouroi, dates the relief to the third century, not on the grounds of letter types (as most previous authors have done) but on the depiction of the figures, which show strong hellenistic

outline below my suggestion for the historical background in which a harmost may have been posted to Kythera in the mid-third century.) It does however provide proof that there was a time when Kythera was under the control of a harmost, albeit at a later date. It may be putting the cart before the horse, but I believe that a case can be made for a third-century harmost being posted in the knowledge of an earlier, fourth-century precedent: and the most likely point at which the Spartans would have posted a harmost to perioikic Kythera was after its two prolonged incidences of revolt. During the Theban-Arkadian invasions in 371/0, the Spartans regarded the island as the safest place of all – so much so that the ephor Antalkidas sent his children there for protection. He must have believed Kythera to be, so to speak, bomb proof; and the likeliest reason for this is that the island was securely protected by a garrison, under the command of a Spartiate officer: a harmost.<sup>172</sup>

## Menandros, the Harmost of Kythera

It used to be thought that harmosts were habitually posted to perioikic poleis to administer them,<sup>173</sup> even though no ancient author ever says

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rather than classical characteristics (Schäfer, *Griechische Dioskurenreliefs*: cat. no. 12). I am very grateful to Michael Schäfer for making this information available to me ahead of publication. Note also that Moritz Kiderlen and Petros Themelis pointed out that ‘Laconian inscriptions [...] are particularly difficult to date on the basis of letter forms alone’ (Kiderlen and Themelis, *Das Poseidonheiligtum bei Akovitika*: 138). Ackermann and Boardman, who based their dating on the relief rather than the letter forms, also dated it to the third century (*LIMC*: 574).

<sup>172</sup> Harmosts were also deployed to allied poleis to conduct military operations and command ships stationed there, such as Gorgopas was to Aigina in 388 (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 5.1.5). However, as we hear of no military activities involving Kythera after its second secession, it seems more likely that an officer was stationed there to oversee the locals and control the island and the harbour, where, as David Lewis observed, not only traders but also ships with supplies from an important Spartan ally, the King of Egypt, would have arrived: David M. Lewis, *Sparta and Persia, Lectures delivered at the University of Cincinnati, 1976 in mem. D. W. Bradeen*, Cincinnati Classical Studies, n.s. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1977): 144 n. 60.

<sup>173</sup> Kahrstedt, *Griechisches Staatsrecht*: 73; Parke, “The Evidence for Harmosts in Laconia”: 38; Bockisch, “Ἀρμοσται”: 131–34. Bucking the trend, Paul Cartledge was sceptical already in 1979: see his *Sparta and Lakonia*: 154.

so explicitly.<sup>174</sup> These harmosts were seen as a measure ‘to govern the perioikoi and keep them in strict subservience to the capital’, as Ernst Curtius put it in 1867.<sup>175</sup> But as we have seen, scholars no longer believe that the perioikoi were being kept in line by military governors, but point instead to ‘soft power’ mechanisms such as ties of patronage and clientage between Spartan and perioikic aristocrats. The only known case of a harmost in a perioikic polis is in Kythera, as is evidenced by the inscription I mentioned above. The short text consists of just three words, ΜΕΝΑΝΔΡΟΣ ἈΡΜΟΣΤΗΡ ΤΙΝΔΑΡΙΔΑΙΣ (*Ménandros harmostér Tindarídais*): ‘Menandros the harmost (dedicated this) to the Tynдарidae.’ A number of scholars assumed that this harmost was identical with the *kytherodíkēs* and a permanent fixture.<sup>176</sup> This is problematic for several reasons: there is no evidence for harmosts at all before the late fifth century,<sup>177</sup> and it is now assumed to be unlikely that a harmost would have been posted to a perioikic polis. The text is accompanied by an image: a bas-relief that shows the gods to whom the stone – a rectangular slab of whiteish marble measuring 29 cm by 40 cm – was dedicated. ‘Tynдарidae’ was the Laconian name for the Dioskouroi, the divine twins Kastor and Polydeukes (Pollux in Rome), after their mortal father Tyn-dareos, a mythical king of Sparta.<sup>178</sup> Their cult was popular across the

<sup>174</sup> A scholion on Pindar’s Olympian Ode 6.154 mentions twenty harmosts of the Lakēdaimonians (ἦσαν δὲ ἄρμοστοὶ Λακεδαιμονίων εἴκοσιν) but does not say where they were posted. For an ingenious but ultimately to my mind not convincing argument see Parke, “The Evidence for Harmosts in Laconia”: 31–38.

<sup>175</sup> ‘[U]m die Periöken zu regieren und in strenger Unterthänigkeit von der Hauptstadt zu erhalten’, Ernst Curtius, *Griechische Geschichte*, vol. 3 (Berlin: Weidmann’sche Buchhandlung, 1867): 6; quoted in Wallner, *Die Perioiken*: 273, who robustly rejected this view.

<sup>176</sup> Rudolf Weil, “Kythera,” *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts (Athen. Abt.)* 5 (1880): 231–32 in 223–43; Kahrstedt, *Griechisches Staatsrecht*: 229–30; Bockisch, “Ἀρμοστοὶ”: 134–35; Cartledge, *Sparta and Lakonia*: 105; Malkin, *Myth and Territory in the Spartan Mediterranean*: 82.

<sup>177</sup> The term is first attested in Thucydides (Thucydides 8.5.2.) for the year 412, but the practice (and perhaps the title) may have started earlier, in 426 with the setting up of the Spartan colony at Herakleia Trachinia (Thucydides 3.92–93; Diodorus Siculus 12.59.3–5). The officers put in charge of individual poleis in Chalkidike in 423 have been seen as ‘proto-harmosts’ (Andrewes, “Spartan imperialism?”: 99; Hornblower, *Comm.* 2: 50).

<sup>178</sup> Their divine father was Zeus and their mother Leda, which made them brothers of Helen; Walter Burkert, *Griechische Religion der archaischen und klassischen Epoche*

Peloponnese, especially at Argos<sup>179</sup> and of course Sparta itself,<sup>180</sup> where the divine twins reputedly lived and where they were associated with the kings.<sup>181</sup>

It has also been suggested that the dedicator, Menandros, may have been one of the Athenian governors posted to the island during its second occupation,<sup>182</sup> but this seems unlikely in the light of the later dating.<sup>183</sup> I suggest instead that the Spartans briefly reconquered Kythera at some point in the third century – perhaps during the reign of Kleomenes III, who strove to restore Spartan control in the Peloponnese. As we saw, Kythera was probably independent in the second half of the fourth century. Its strategic importance (and its rich deposits of murex shells from which the purple dye for the famous Spartans cloaks of old was won) would have made it an attractive proposition for a king ambitious to restore Sparta to its former greatness. We may assume that the Kytherians were less keen to come back under Spartan control, and put up stiff resistance: hence the posting of a harmost, and probably a garrison. Harmosts had gone out of fashion by the hellenistic period,<sup>184</sup> but if there had been a harmost in Kythera previously, it would explain why

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(Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1977): 324; Tanja Scheer and Anne Ley, “Dioskuroi,” in *Der Neue Pauly*, vol. 3, ed. Hubert Cancik and Helmuth Schneider (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1997): 673–77, 673; *LIMC* 3.1: 567.

<sup>179</sup> Scheer and Ley, “Dioskuroi”: 674.

<sup>180</sup> See for example Aristphanes, *Lysistrata* 1301 and *Peace* 214; Xenophon, *Hellenica* 4.4.10.

<sup>181</sup> Herodotos 5.75.2, cf. Burkert, *Griechische Religion*: 325 with n. 7.

<sup>182</sup> Shipley, “Lakedaimon”: 584; but note Simon Hornblower’s decisive statement that ‘this man is obviously a Spartan’, Hornblower, *Comm.* 2: 215.

<sup>183</sup> In addition, the text uses the Laconian name for the twins (rather than the pan-Greek one, Dioskouroi) in the Spartan spelling ‘Tindaridai’ rather than ‘Tyndaridai’ (Burkert, *Griechische Religion*: 325); *contra* Weil, who assumed it to be a spelling mistake due to ‘Flüchtigkeit des Steinmetzen’ (‘the stone-cutter’s carelessness’, Weil, “Kythera”: 231). Lastly, Menandros describes his rank as *harmostēr*, rather than *harmostēs*. This spelling is also employed by Xenophon (*Hellenica* 4.8.39), who is known to employ technical Spartan terminology. Meyer deduced from this that it ‘ist also wohl die in Sparta selbst gebräuchliche [Form] gewesen’ (‘it will have been the form used at Sparta itself’, *Theopomps Hellenica*: 263 n. 3); see also Stephen Hodkinson, “Social Order and the Conflict of Values in Classical Sparta,” *Chiron* 13 (1983): 239–81, 250 n. 26.

<sup>184</sup> The last harmosts we know of date back to the early 370s, cf. Bockisch, “Ἀρμοσται”: 227 with n. 4.

Kleomenes – or another traditionally-minded Spartan leader in third-century Laconia – thought of posting one there again a full century later.

This admittedly hypothetical scenario again shows, as do the Kytherians' previous – and better attested – changes of allegiance, the limited room for manoeuvre available to small poleis whose 'actions and/or access to [...] resources' were controlled by others:<sup>185</sup> Kythera had once been Argive (or: controlled by Argos); it became Lakedaimonian after Argos had been defeated by the Lakedaimonians, and – temporarily – Athenian under pressure of a large Athenian fleet. We do not know whether independence was something the Kytherians had wanted, or whether they got it because someone (perhaps Philip II) decided to clip Sparta's wings by removing this part of its territory. Clearly, whatever political status the Kytherians may have wished for, they were too small to achieve it on their own, and so they would always have to depend on an outside power.

### 3. *'Many of the perioikic poleis had revolted'* (Xenophon, Agesilaus 2.24)

The best-known and most serious cases of collective perioikic insubordination occurred in the two years following the battle of Leuktra in 371, at which the Lakedaimonians famously suffered their first major defeat in a hoplite encounter. That defeat and its aftermath would in time reduce Sparta from its status of a great Greek power to that 'of a second-rate provincial squabbler', as Paul Cartledge pithily put it.<sup>186</sup> However, none of this was immediately apparent. What was clear was that the balance of power in central Greece had been upset: Sparta was weakened, the Boiotians (the victors of Leuktra) were in the ascendant, and pro-democrats across the Peloponnese began to feel exceedingly hopeful. Perhaps foreseeing the wave of revolt, upheaval and political score-settling that was to sweep across the Peloponnese, the big regional powers attempted to put the lid back on the situation by reaffirming the terms of the King's Peace in a conference convened at Athens in late 371

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<sup>185</sup> Winnebeck et al., "The Analytical Concept of Asymmetrical Dependency": 25.

<sup>186</sup> Paul Cartledge and Antony Spawforth, *Hellenistic and Roman Sparta: A Tale of Two Cities* (London: Routledge, 2002): 3.

(Xenophon, *Hellenica* 6.5.1–3). But it was already too late: all over the Peloponnese the tectonic plates of power politics were shifting for the first time in centuries. Several of Sparta’s Peloponnesian League allies openly negotiated alliances with the Boiotians.<sup>187</sup> Oligarchic regimes were bloodily overthrown in a number of poleis, including Corinth, Sikyon, Argos, and, of particular significance for the present context, the Arkadian cities of Tegea and Mantinea.<sup>188</sup> During the summer of 370, the scattered Arkadian settlements in the rugged uplands north of Laconia, for decades staunch allies of the Lakedaimonians, now turned their backs on them and formed their own political federation with democratic leanings. Shortly afterwards, the Arkadians, the Eleians in the far west of the Peloponnese, and the Boiotians entered into a triple alliance. All of this happened practically under the noses of the perioikoi in north-eastern Laconia. To many of them the new Arkadian Federation, quasi-democratic and with powerful backers, must have looked like an attractive alternative to a weakened and unchangingly oligarchic Sparta.

In this section, I will explore, in a first step, the different decisions taken by three perioikic communities in north-eastern Laconia, namely Karyai (I), the Skiritis (II) and, briefly, Sellasia (III). Both Karyai and the Skiritis turned away from Sparta and, by invoking (actual or invented) shared kinship, sought to associate themselves with the Arkadians; while Sellasia may have temporarily joined the invaders. I will then look at their different fates: Karyai suffered a harsh punishment two years after defecting, while the Skiritai were successful in their revolt: their entire territory ceased to belong to the state of Lakedaimon<sup>189</sup> and a large part of its population was absorbed into the new pan-Arcadian city of Megalopolis.<sup>190</sup> Sellasia appears not to have suffered any ill effects.

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<sup>187</sup> Xenophon, *Hellenica* 6.4.24. For the unravelling of the Peloponnesian League after Leuktra, see Charles Hamilton, *Agessilaos and the Failure of Spartan Hegemony* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991): 219–23.

<sup>188</sup> For *staseis* and political upheavals following Leuktra, see Ephraim David, *Sparta Between Empire and Revolution (404–243 B.C.): Internal Problems and their Impact on Contemporary Greek Consciousness* (New York: Arno Press, 1981): 79–84; Cartledge, *Agessilaos*: 383–85; Daniel Stewart, “From Leuktra to Nabis: 371–192,” in *A Companion to Sparta*, vol. 1, ed. Anton Powell (Hoboken: Wiley, 2018): 379–81 in 374–402.

<sup>189</sup> Pausanias 8.27.4; cf. Shipley, “The Extent of Spartan Territory”: 371–74.

<sup>190</sup> Nielsen, *Arkadia and its Poleis*: 107.

## Karyai

Famous for its cult site of Artemis in the mountainous border region towards Arkadia, Karyai was a small rural community some thirty kilometres to the north of Sparta, between (Lakedaimonian) Sellasia and (Arkadian) Tegea. Thucydides tells us that the sacrifice habitually offered by the kings on passing out of Lakonikē was performed there (Thucydides 5.55.3), which gave the place a religious and political charge.<sup>191</sup> Crucially, Karyai was strategically located on one of the main roads out of (and into) Laconia.<sup>192</sup>

It is very likely, given Sparta's well-known problem of *oliganthropia* (shortage of men) especially after Leuktra, that Skiritai as well as hoplites from Karyai and Sellasia formed part of the Lakedaimonian army which marched against the Arkadians under king Agesilaos in the winter of 370 (Xenophon, *Agesilaos* 2.23). But discontent must have been brewing even then, perhaps only reinforced by the – otherwise uneventful – campaign in now-independent Arkadia: this, the Karyans and Skiritai may have thought, is how we could be. When only a few weeks later the combined forces of Arkadians, Boiotians, Eleians and others massed north of the border, the perioikoi in the north-east decided to throw in their lot with the invaders and secede from Sparta. Xenophon tells us that even before the invasion had begun, 'there came (men) from the Karyans' (ἦκον ἔκ τε Καρυῶν, Xenophon, *Hellenica* 6.5.25) who told the allies about the manpower shortage and did their best to encourage them to invade.<sup>193</sup> I think it likely that these Karyans were official representatives of the citizen body of their polis, which had decided on this course of action. There is no information in the sources about the details of perioikic self-

<sup>191</sup> Cartledge and Spawforth, *A Tale of Two Cities*: 6.

<sup>192</sup> For Karyai's strategic importance see Buckler, *The Theban Hegemony*: 77 and 92; see also Christien, "Roads and Quarries": 621. Its precise location is disputed; the most likely site is modern Analipsi; for a discussion of the various possibilities see Shipley, "The Extent of Spartan Territory": 375, and Shipley, "Lakedaimon": 574; see also Cartledge, *Sparta and Lakonia*: 162; Wallner, *Die Perioiken*: 171–73.

<sup>193</sup> John Buckler suggested that the initiative did not lie with the disaffected perioikoi but that 'Epameinondas had already been exploring the possibility of an invasion' and himself made first contact (Buckler, *The Theban Hegemony*: 75). This may of course be, although there is nothing in the sources to support it.



government; but Sikyon, a member of the Peloponnesian League, held a vote on ‘whether to revolt’ from Sparta (εἰ δοκοίη ἀφίστασθαι, Xenophon, *Hellenica* 7.3.2). Presumably at least some of the perioikic poleis would have done the same before taking such a momentous step. In others, the citizen body may have been split, with some joining the invaders while others stayed and fought them. The severe collective punishment that was later visited upon the Karyans – instead of a trial just of the pro-Arkadians – may indicate that the Spartans held the entire polis responsible. (See below pp. 61–64).

Perioikoi from other, unspecified, places also approached the invaders; perhaps representatives of anti-Spartan factions in their cities rather than the entire citizenry: they promised that the perioikoi would defect as soon as the Boiotian-Arkadian army made its appearance, which indicates that processes of decision-making were still ongoing.

The invading forces split into four contingents, crossed the passes into Laconia, and re-joined to march south towards Sparta.<sup>194</sup>

## The Skiritis

The Skiritis was a mountainous territory of some one hundred sq km between Sparta and Tegea.<sup>195</sup> Its inhabitants lived in scattered homesteads or villages, and we know of only one urban settlement in the region, the small polis of Oios or Oion.<sup>196</sup> The Skiritai always fought on the prestigious left wing (Thucydides 5.67.1) of the Lakedaimonian

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<sup>194</sup> For the invasion routes see Buckler, *The Theban Hegemony*: 78–82; Hamilton, *Agésilas and the Failure of Spartan Hegemony*: 221 (map) and 224; Christien, “The Lacedaemonian State”: 168–69.

<sup>195</sup> Shipley, “Lakedaimon”: 577.

<sup>196</sup> For its probable polis status see Shipley, “Lakedaimon”: 585. – I have grouped the Skiritai among the perioikoi (as do other scholars), although strictly speaking they were in a class of their own: Xenophon once explicitly lists ‘men from the perioikoi and from the Skiritai’ (των περιόικων καὶ των Σκιριτῶν ἀνδρας, Xenophon, *Hellenica* 5.2.24). Graham Shipley suggested that “‘Skiritis’ denoted any southern Arkadian territory occupied by Sparta’ (Shipley, “The Extent of Spartan Territory”: 373), which might make the Skiritai a sort of conquered subject allies.

army.<sup>197</sup> When the army was on campaign, the Skiritai served as sentries (Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lakedaimonians* 12.3) and as scouts (Hesychius s.v. Σκαίριτης): which we might interpret either as a distinction for bravery (Diodorus Siculus 15.32.1) or a token of their dependency (Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 4.2.1; cf. Isocrates 12.180). As far as we know, they had not previously expressed any discontent with their role in the Lakedaimonian state; and they must have been regarded as loyal and trustworthy by the Spartans.

Unlike the Karyans, the Skiritai seem not to have initiated contact with the Boiotians or Arkadians, but there can be little doubt that the entire citizen body decided to defect: when the invaders came, the road that led through the Skiritis towards Sparta was defended not by any locals, but only by a Spartan force of *neodamodeis* (manumitted Helots with citizen status) joined by a contingent of oligarchic exiles from Tegea (who had fled to Sparta after a democratic uprising). They made a heroic but futile last stand (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 6.5.26; Diodorus Siculus 15.64.3–5).

It was not the first time that the region had changed sides. What was now Laconian borderland near Arkadia had probably itself once been Arkadian;<sup>198</sup> or rather: before the rise of Sparta, the region encompassing the Skiritis and Karyai had been controlled by Arkadian Tegea – which is not quite the same thing.<sup>199</sup> James Roy pointed out that ethnic self-identification was something of a luxury for small, comparatively powerless communities located near larger, more powerful ones, to whom they

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<sup>197</sup> The most honourable – because it was the most exposed and therefore dangerous – position was the right wing, the second most honourable one the left wing. Both positions were usually held by experienced and trusted troops; cf. Jon Lendon, *Soldiers and Ghosts. A History of Battle in Classical Antiquity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005): 69.

<sup>198</sup> This is suggested by Polybios' formulation that after Leuktra, the Spartans 'were confined within the boundaries of Lakonike' (Σπαρτιάται [...] συνεκλείσθησαν εἰς τοὺς τῆς Λακωνικῆς ὄρους, Polybios 38.2.9), as well as a note in the ninth-century CE *Lexicon* by the Byzantine scholar Photios, an admittedly late source, whose brief entry for Karyai references a festival to Artemis and notes that 'Karyai was detached from the Arkadians by the Lakedaimonians' (τάς Καρύας Ἀρκάδων ἀπετέμοντο οὐσας Λακεδαιμόνιοι, Photios, *Lexicon*, s.v. Καρύαται); cf. Catling, "The Survey Area": 239.

<sup>199</sup> Cf. Catling, "The Survey Area": 243.

were well advised to adapt.<sup>200</sup> In the archaic period, the biggest regional force had been Arkadian Tegea, towards which Karyai and the Skiritis had gravitated, becoming Arkadian in the process. When Sparta rose to be the dominant regional power and conquered the region, they shed their Arkadian identity and became Lakedaimonian instead. But in the winter of 370, when Sparta was weakened and a large Arkadian-Theban army appeared on the horizon, the Karyans and Skiritai rediscovered their Arkadian roots: which now, as they were hoping to find a new powerful protector, became a help rather than a hindrance.

## Sellasia

Located near modern Palaiogoulas, ancient Sellasia was a small town or large village<sup>201</sup> some twenty-five kilometres north of Sparta. It seems to have served as a sort of border post: when an Athenian embassy travelled to Sparta towards the end of the Peloponnesian War, its members were first held at Sellasia until the ephors agreed to see them in Sparta (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 2.2.13 and 19). Like Karyai, Sellasia was a ‘major bottleneck’ along the route from the north and therefore of supreme strategic importance.<sup>202</sup>

Despite this fact, it is not wholly clear how the Sellasian perioikoi reacted to the invasion in 370. According to Xenophon, the city was sacked and burned by the Thebans (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 6.5.27), which certainly suggests that it was regarded as hostile and may have put up resistance. Diodoros meanwhile reports that the Boiotians caused the

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<sup>200</sup> James Roy, “Finding the Limits of Laconia: Defining and Redefining Communities on the Spartan-Arkadian Frontier,” in *Sparta and Laconia: From Prehistory to Pre-modern. Proceedings of the Conference Held in Sparta, Organised by the British School at Athens, the University of Nottingham, the 5th Ephoreia of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities and the 5th Ephoreia of Byzantine Antiquities, 17–20 March 2005*, ed. William Cavanagh, Chrysanthi Gallou, and Mercurios Georgiadis, BSA Studies 16 (London: The British School at Athens, 2009): 205–11, 210.

<sup>201</sup> For the probable size of Sellasia in the classical period see Catling, “The Survey Area”: 196–97.

<sup>202</sup> Buckler, *The Theban Hegemony*: 75. See also Polybios’ description of how Kleomenes prepared the route for the battle of Sellasia in 222, Polybios 2.65.7–8.

inhabitants to revolt from the Lakedaimonians (15.64.1). It may be that, like the Kytherians in 424, the Sellasians offered some initial resistance before deciding to bow to the invaders' superior force and to join them.<sup>203</sup> The town may not have been walled at the time, and if there was a garrison holding the nearby mountain fortress at modern-day Agios Konstantínos that controlled the road, it will have been vastly outnumbered and overrun.<sup>204</sup>

## How many of the Perioikic Poleis Did Revolt?

The Theban-Arkadian army, additionally swelled by perioikic contingents (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 6.5.32, Xenophon, *Agesilaus* 2.24; Plutarch, *Agesilaus* 32.7), proceeded south. There was some sort of stand-off outside the city of Sparta, but the invaders did not cross the Eurotas, which was swollen with winter rains (Diodorus Siculus 15.65.1; Plutarch, *Agesilaus* 32.1). Instead they went south, towards the coast, looting and burning unfortified settlements along the route. Eventually, the allied armies turned back and marched north-westwards: towards Messenia, which Epameinondas now declared liberated and autonomous under the protection of Thebes. (It is tempting to speculate that Messenian perioikoi played a role in this decision, perhaps approaching Epameinondas with this very suggestion just like the men from Karyai had done.) Construction of the massive circuit wall around the newly (re)founded polis of Messene began immediately.

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<sup>203</sup> This is how Barbara Wallner interpreted the sources: 'Die Thebaner rückten nach Sparta vor, verbrannten und verwüsteten Sellasia, und brachten die Bewohner auf diese Weise dazu, von den Lakedaimoniern abzufallen.' ('The Thebans advanced towards Sparta, burning and ravaging Sellasia, and thereby caused the inhabitants to revolt from the Lakedaimonians.') Wallner, *Die Perioiken*: 165; so also Villafane Silva, "The Perioikoi": 95–96. Shipley did not doubt that it 'was certainly burned and pillaged by the Thebans' (Shipley, "The Extent of Spartan Territory": 380), while James Roy hesitated to commit himself, observing merely that 'it is difficult to know who is right' (Roy, "Finding the Limits of Laconia": 208).

<sup>204</sup> For the fortress at Agios Konstantínos (its ancient name is not known) see Catling, "The Survey Area": 163, see also 239.

Altogether the invasion lasted for some three months (Diodorus Siculus 15.67.1; Plutarch, *Agesilaos* 33.8), but it is difficult to gain a picture of the events of that winter that goes beyond these broad strokes. How many of the perioikoi decided to join the invaders, temporarily or for good? And what were their reasons: discontent, expediency, making a desperate choice for what seemed to be the lesser of two evils? In the *Hellenica*, Xenophon says that ‘some of the perioikoi’ (τινες τῶν περιοίκων, 6.5.32) had revolted, while in the *Agesilaos* it is ‘many of the perioikic poleis’ (πολλῶν δὲ περιοικίδων πόλεων, 2.24). Plutarch reports that as the invaders threatened the city of Sparta, ‘many of the perioikoi and Helots who had been drawn up under arms defected to the enemy’ (πολλοὶ τῶν συντεταγμένων εἰς τὰ ὄπλα περιοίκων καὶ εἰλώτων ἀπεδίδρασκον ἐκ τῆς πόλεως πρὸς τοὺς πολεμίους, 32.7), and Polyainos (albeit writing many centuries after the events) likewise mentions that ‘many went over to the enemy’ (πολλῶν αὐτομολούντων, 2.1.15). Perhaps, as in Messenia during the Great Revolt a century earlier, individuals and communities changed sides more than once during this chaotic period of fluctuating fortunes and loyalties: at different points each of these statements may have been true in turn. Many poleis may have changed allegiance after putting up initial resistance against the numerically far superior invaders, as Sellasia had probably done. Perioikic settlements were small and dispersed; unless they were walled like Gytheion, individual poleis were too small to resist and had to surrender if they did not want to suffer – as Lakonian Pellana did, which was captured and its inhabitants enslaved by the Arkadians (Diodorus Siculus 15.67.2).<sup>205</sup>

We do know with reasonable certainty that the perioikic settlements along the southern and eastern coast remained loyal.<sup>206</sup> The port city of Gytheion on the south coast was besieged for three days but held firm. Reinforcements sent by Sparta’s remaining allies in the Peloponnesian

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<sup>205</sup> Cameron Hawkins interpreted this plausibly as punitive action for remaining loyal to Sparta; Hawkins, “Spartans and *Perioikoi*”: 431.

<sup>206</sup> Also, as Villafane Silva argued, there was likely an element of rhetorical exaggeration in Xenophon’s claim in his encomium of Agesilaos that ‘many of the perioikic poleis revolted’. Its intent was to highlight the swift and effective action taken by Agesilaos, whose efforts shine all the brighter against this gloomy backdrop; see Villafane Silva, “The *Perioikoi*”: 93.

League arrived on the eastern coast in the neighbourhood of Prasiai (near modern Leontini) and marched from there over the mountains towards Amyklai, where the invaders then stood (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 7.2.2–3).

In the end, most of the ‘other Lakedaimonians’ appear to have decided to stick with the status quo – or rather, most perioikic poleis. We have no way of telling how many perioikoi had individually decided to leave for another life elsewhere.<sup>207</sup> Certainly the tripartite Lakedaimonian state made up of Spartans, perioikoi and Helots continued to exist, albeit on a smaller scale, for more than another century and a half.<sup>208</sup>

## The Massacre of Karyai

In the immediate wake of the invasion, the Spartans cast about for new allies and, in their newly weakened state, had to engage in lengthy negotiations (with, amongst others, Athens and, much further afield, the Persian satrap Ariobarzanes and the tyrant Dionysios of Syracuse). The Arkadians used this period to launch another invasion of the north-east during the summer of 369, probably again using the route that led from Tegea via Karyai.<sup>209</sup>

It may have been this clear indication of how vulnerable Laconia was with Karyai in the enemy camp that decided the Spartans to strike here first, but the more significant cause will have been the fact that the Karyans had pro-actively approached and encouraged the invaders: in Spartan eyes an act of unprovoked treachery. In 368, Agesilaos’ son

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<sup>207</sup> Carl Roebuck suggested that the newly (re)founded polis of Messene in 369 was peopled by ‘the helots previously settled on the Spartiate territory and [...] the perioeci who had joined the Thebans in the course of the invasion,’ Roebuck, “A History of Messenia”: 34; this was accepted by John Buckler, *The Theban Hegemony*: 86.

<sup>208</sup> It still existed during the reign of Agis IV in the 240s (Plutarch, *Agis* 8.2) but lapsed after the reign of Nabis in the early second century BCE, when the majority of the perioikic poleis were detached from Sparta by the Romans (or detached themselves?), and formed an independent league; cf. Kennell, “From Perioikoi to Poleis”: 190–94; and see now Müller, “How (Not) to Be a Citizen”: 80–83.

<sup>209</sup> Xenophon, *Hellenica* 7.1.25; Diodorus Siculus 15.67.2. For the route see Buckler, *The Theban Hegemony*: 92; Christien, “The Lakedaimonian State”: 168–69.

Archidamos led a combined force of Lakedaimonian hoplites and mercenaries sent by Dionysios of Syracuse against Karyai. They took the settlement ‘by force and slaughtered all prisoners’ (Καρύας μὲν ἐξαιρεῖ κατὰ κράτος, καὶ ὅσους ζῶντας ἔλαβεν, ἀπέσφαξεν. Xenophon, *Hellenica* 7.1.28).

The massacre was intended to make an example of Karyai and to demonstrate Spartan power, ‘and thereby maintain the social order of asymmetrical dependency’:<sup>210</sup> it sent a clear signal to other perioikic poleis which may still have been wavering, or had temporarily turned their backs. It was also a measure of Sparta’s desperation: the Karyans had to stand in for all those who were now beyond the Spartans’ grasp, including the new, independent Messenia that had been (re)founded a year earlier.<sup>211</sup>

It is worth stressing that among those who slaughtered the Karyans were not only mercenaries and Spartans, but also perioikic hoplites. Xenophon tells us that Archidamos marched out with the mercenaries plus τὸ πολιτικόν [στράτευμα], τὸ *politikón* [*stráteuma*], ‘the citizen army’, the expression he habitually employs for the Lakedaimonian army made up of Spartiates plus perioikoi.<sup>212</sup> Loyal perioikoi participated in the punishment of disloyal ones.<sup>213</sup> Perhaps this was another reason for the unusual brutality: it was a ritual of horror that allowed none of those involved in it to turn back, a baptism of blood so far beyond normal modes of behaviour that all who took part in it thus demonstrated their (renewed) commitment to the Lakedaimonian state.

On a completely different level, perioikic participation in the massacre also shows up the fallacy of regarding ‘the perioikoi’ as some sort of homogenous group with, perhaps, even a collective identity.<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Winnebeck et al., “The Analytical Concept of Asymmetrical Dependency”: 20.

<sup>211</sup> A point made by a discussant in the Kolloquium für Alte Geschichte at Bonn.

<sup>212</sup> Paul Cartledge, *Sparta and Lakonia*: 153; Ducat, “The Perioikoi”: 611.

<sup>213</sup> This was also underlined by Shipley, who noted that the reconquests of both Karyai and Sellasia were undertaken by ‘Sparta and the other Lakedaimonians’, *The Early Hellenistic Peloponnese*: 36.

<sup>214</sup> A point already made in 1992 by Graham Shipley (“Perioic Society”: 188–89) but worth repeating, as this recent, egregious example shows: ‘Nach moderner Auffassung hätten die Periöken als unterprivilegierte Bevölkerung, als Bürger zweiter Klasse, zwar Grund genug gehabt, eine Änderung ihres Status anzustreben, überliefert sind aber allenfalls sehr geringe Ansätze dazu. Von Revolten hören wir fast nichts, und nur auf

The polis of Karyai continued to exist.<sup>215</sup> We do not know how many of its people were killed, and how many others may have fled into Arkadia; or whether its population post-368 was augmented by pro-Lakedaimonian colonists.<sup>216</sup> It was back under Spartan control in the 360s, although unable (or unwilling? But in the light of the harsh punishment this seems unlikely) to stop a further Boiotian invasion under Epameinondas in 362;<sup>217</sup> but the town changed sides again, probably before the end of the fourth century and perhaps already in 338, when Philip II of Macedon detached further parts of Lakedaimonian territory after the battle of Chaironeia and gave them to Argos, Messenia and the Arkadian poleis of Tegea and Megalopolis (Polybius 9.28.7).<sup>218</sup> Philip may have acted of his own accord, or perhaps his actions were prompted by representatives from some of those places who came and asked for their communities to be handed over. Perhaps men from Karyai once more took a hand in their town's fate.

Karyai was still Tegean in 195 (Livy 34.26.1), then temporarily brought back under Spartan rule by Nabis in 192 (Livy 35.27.11–13). It seems likely that the town reverted back to Tegea in the much more

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sich selbst gestellt haben die Periöken offenbar garnichts unternommen.' ('According to modern thinking, the perioikoi, an underprivileged population and second-class citizens, would have had ample reason to seek to change their status, but very few attempts to do so are on the record. We hear almost nothing about revolts, and of their own accord the perioikoi seem to have done nothing at all.') Martin Dreher, "Stabilität und Gefährdung des spartanischen Kosmos," in *Ordine e sovversione nel mondo greco e romano: Atti del convegno internazionale, Cividale del Friuli, 25–27 Settembre 2008*, ed. Gianpaolo Urso (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2009): 39–67, 43.

<sup>215</sup> Shipley, "'The Other Lakedaimonians'": 239. The town was rebuilt and fortified after the invasion: a fortification wall has been found which was 'built over houses from the early fourth century.' Christien, "The Lacedemonian State": 171.

<sup>216</sup> Perhaps some of those 6,000 Helots who in 370 had volunteered to fight the invaders for a reward of liberation (Plutarch, *Agesilaos* 32.6)?

<sup>217</sup> On the occasion of Epameinondas' sack of Sparta prior to the (second) battle of Mantinea. According to both Xenophon (*Hellenica* 7.5.9) and Polybios (9.8.4), he took the direct route towards Sparta, while Agesilaos had already marched out and stood at Pellana, which lay on the only other road up the Eurotas valley. So the only available route that would have led Epameinondas and his troops from Tegea to Sparta was the one via Karyai and Sellasia; the same the Arkadian contingent had taken in 370. For the route see Buckler, *The Theban Hegemony*: 210 and 315 n. 47.

<sup>218</sup> Ioanna Kralli, *The Hellenistic Peloponnese: Interstate Relations. A Narrative and Analytic History, 371–146 BC* (Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales, 2017): 63 and 80 n. 56; and see also Wallner, *Die Periöken*: 171.



severe reduction of Spartan-controlled territory after the fall of Nabis.<sup>219</sup> and this was where it remained. In the second century CE, Pausanias (8.45.1) reported a Tegean founding myth which listed Karyai as one of its nine constituent villages.

## The Skiritis Becomes Arkadian

It was a very different story for the Skiritis. After 370, the entire north-west of Lakonikē permanently ceased to be part of the Lakedaimonian state,<sup>220</sup> although not altogether beyond the grasp of Sparta. When Archidamos campaigned against the Arkadians in 365, he ravaged ‘as much of Arkadia and the Skiritis as he could’,<sup>221</sup> treating it as enemy territory but failing to reconquer it (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 7.4.11). A large percentage of the population had by this time already left and moved to the newly founded, pan-Arkadian city of Megalopolis.<sup>222</sup> This did not stop repeated Spartan attempts at reconquest: as late as in the 230s, the ephors sent Kleomenes III north-west to try to take back parts of the ‘north-west passage’<sup>223</sup> towards Megalopolis, but to no avail. An inscription dating to the mid-second century BCE claimed confidently that the region and its inhabitants had been Arkadian from mythical times onwards, even before the return of the Herakleidai (*Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum* 665).

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<sup>219</sup> So Hans von Geisau, “Karyai 2,” in *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, vol. 10.2, ed. Wilhelm Kroll (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1919): 2245–46, 2246); while Shipley (“The Extent of Spartan Territory”: 375) and Hawkins (“Spartans and *Perioikoi*”: 430) were sceptical.

<sup>220</sup> Pausanias 8.27.4; cf. Shipley, “The Extent of Spartan Territory”: 371–75.

<sup>221</sup> ἐδήου καὶ τῆς Ἀρκαδίας ὅσα ἐδύνατο καὶ τῆς Σκιρίτιδος, Xenophon, *Hellenica* 7.4.21.

<sup>222</sup> Christien, “The Lacedemonian State”: 172. The only urban settlement in the region, the town of Oios or Oion, was probably abandoned at that time, cf. Shipley, “The Extent of Spartan Territory”: 373; Shipley, “Lakedaimon”: 585; Nielsen, *Arkadia and its Poleis*: 107.

<sup>223</sup> The expression is Shipley’s, “The Extent of Spartan Territory”: 371.

## Sellasia Unpunished

The fate of Sellasia was remarkably different from that of Karyai. The Spartans retook the town five years after the original invasion, in 365 (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 7.4.12).<sup>224</sup> We hear nothing about any punitive action, which would fit in with the scenario outlined above, i.e. that Sellasia was conquered or surrendered over only after initial resistance. Sellasia remained perioikic, which may be a further indication of its fundamental loyalty to Sparta – although, given its physical proximity to Spartan territory (cf. Plutarch, *Agis* 8.1), a transfer of loyalty elsewhere can never have been a realistic proposition. The town was still staunchly Lakedaimonian, and its citizens still fought alongside the Spartans, a century and a half later, when it became the battleground for Sparta's decisive defeat by Antigonos Doson in 222 (Polybius 2.65.7–10). The Sellasians were sold into slavery after that battle and the town abandoned or destroyed; the travel writer Pausanias saw its ruins in the second century CE (Pausanias 2.9.2; 3.10.7).

## Perioikic Dependency, Loyalty and Insurgency

As a bundle of events, the invasions of 371–369 offer a chance to gain a better understanding of perioikic dependency, loyalty and insurgency. It is notable that it took a major defeat combined with a full-scale enemy invasion to attract Laconian perioikic communities away from Sparta. The Lakedaimonian polity had been remarkably stable until then, partly due to a lack of available alternatives, but also because the perioikic

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<sup>224</sup> The lapse of five years may be an indication of the Spartans' weakness, and/or of their decision to prioritise other matters (there was quite a long list to choose from, not least an internal reorganisation after the huge territorial loss of Messenia). Most scholars accept the date, although Richard Catling pointed out that 'it is odd that Sparta was able to attack and capture Karyai, well to the north of Sellasia, several years before it was in a position to recover Sellasia itself', and drew attention to the involvement of Syracusan troops in both actions. He plausibly suggested that Xenophon may have separated two events which may have happened during the same campaign. In this scenario, Sellasia would have been reconquered already in 368, followed by the massacre at Karyai. Catling, "The Survey Area": 239.

elites were content with the status quo, out of which they had done very well. The different ways in which individual poleis reacted allow us to identify the factors that were strong enough to change the equation. Physical location played an important part: settlements on or near a border – such as Karyai and the Skiritis – were more likely to attempt to break away than a town such as Sellasia, which lay much nearer Sparta. A separate ethnic identity or origin story gave would-be rebels a plausible reason to secede – perhaps to themselves, but, crucially, also to other Greeks. Perhaps the most important element was the presence of another power willing and able to support and protect them against Spartans and loyal perioikoi.

## After the Invasions

Lakonikē was almost halved by the loss – or the liberation, depending on one’s point of view – of large parts of fertile Messenia. This was a huge blow, which contributed much to Sparta’s decline. But east of the Taygetos mountain range, in Laconia, remarkably little changed. Apart from the north-west, which was now Arkadian, there were only minor changes to the territory controlled by Sparta until the Roman conquest in 195.<sup>225</sup> Even the defeat inflicted by the Macedonians under Antigonos Dason at Sellasia in 222 only resulted in comparatively minor losses of territory.

This indicates that, for a variety of reasons, most perioikic poleis post-369 decided to remain Lakedaimonian. The malcontents had had their chance to leave with the invaders, and doubtless many took it. But this is not to say that nothing changed in Laconia.

For the perioikic poleis, a weakened Sparta appears to have resulted in less dependency and some more autonomy. In our scattered evidence, mostly inscriptions, we can see them reaching out to their peers, to other small and middling-sized poleis. There are several proxeny decrees from the fourth and third centuries that link perioikic poleis to other Greek

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<sup>225</sup> See the discussion in Shipley, “The Extent of Spartan Territory”: 390.

communities. A proxeny catalogue from the Cycladic island of Keos – modern-day Kea –, dated to the first half of the fourth century,<sup>226</sup> lists *proxenoi* for that island (or perhaps one of its poleis) in the city of Sparta – and in three perioikic poleis: Pellana, Kyphanta and Epidaurous Limera.<sup>227</sup> A fragmentary third-century inscription from Epidaurous Limera (*Sammlung der griechischen Dialekt-Inschriften*, no. 4549) mentions *proxenia*; unfortunately neither the name of the *proxenos* nor that of his polis have been preserved. In an inscription found at Delphi and dated to 276/5 BCE, the citizens of Tyros on the east coast of Laconia, who describe themselves as *κόμα Λακεδαιμονίων*, *kóma Lakedaimoníōn*, ‘a Lakedaimonian community’ or even ‘village’ (i.e. not a polis), record a gift of fifty oxen they collectively made to the god Apollo (*Fouilles de Delphes* III 1.68).

There is, to the best of my knowledge, as yet no systematic study of relations between perioikic poleis, both among themselves and with the rest of the (Greek) world.<sup>228</sup> Inscriptions from Laconia urgently need to be freshly edited, and new archaeological findings integrated into existing scholarship. I believe that this would show a two-pronged development of the post-370 Lakedaimonian periphery: contacts between elite perioikoi and Sparta went on in the traditional vein (Sparta continued to be the wealthiest and most powerful city in the region even after the Roman conquest in 195<sup>229</sup>); but as a weakened Sparta was less able to dominate its dependents, a number of perioikic poleis developed additional contacts to places beyond the region.

<sup>226</sup> Mack, “Proxeny and Polis”: 182 and 320–22.

<sup>227</sup> *Inscriptiones Graecae* XII 5.542; the individual poleis are listed in lines 18 (Λακε] δαιμόνιο[ς, i.e. a Spartan), 20 (Πελλ[α]νεὸς ἐ[κ τῆς Λακω]νικῆς), 21 (Κυφα]ντασεύ[ς] and 22 (Ἐπιδ]αύριος ἐκ τ[ῆ]ς Λακ[ωνικῆς]). Unfortunately the right-hand half of the stela with the names of the *proxenoi* has been lost.

<sup>228</sup> Barbara Wallner made a valiant attempt to address the topic in her 2007 study (Wallner, *Die Peioiken*: esp. 237–43 for inter-perioikic economic and commercial contacts), but like the majority of scholars she predominantly looked at the perioikoi in terms of their relationship with Sparta, not with each other or indeed without Sparta. Carlos Villafane Silva’s 2015 doctoral thesis devoted chapters to ‘The *perioikoi* and the Helots’ (47–68) and ‘The *perioikoi* and the Spartans’ (69–97) respectively, but not to individual perioikic poleis or citizens amongst themselves.

<sup>229</sup> A point stressed by Graham Shipley, *The Early Hellenistic Peloponnese*: 36.

## Conclusion: The Rewards of Dependency and the Cost of Revolt

I set out to determine the rewards and the costs of dependency, and find out why some perioikic poleis chose to revolt when the large majority did not. I began by looking at the configuration of the Lakedaimonian state, which made it almost impossible for individual perioikic poleis to change the existing dependency dynamic, or to escape it altogether: the perioikic communities were small and scattered, and each was a political entity. Even if we mostly speak of the ‘other Lakedaimonians’ as a collective (as I also do in this essay), it is important to bear in mind that the members of each perioikic polis identified as citizens of their own community (as well as of the state of Lakedaimon). Each polis was politically (and perhaps also economically) subordinate to Sparta, but its elite benefited from this state of affairs: its members probably lived in material conditions that were no different from those of the Spartiates. We saw that they had relations of clientage with the kings, and probably also with members of the Spartan elite, which tied the elite of each perioikic community directly to Sparta. I compared this political set-up to a rimless wheel, in which contact flowed only between the hub and each spoke. This created a periphery oriented exclusively on the centre that was thus easily able to exert control. This control was, for the most part, willingly accepted. Perioikic elite members enjoyed status, stability, security and material gains (such as spoils of war), which together we might describe as the rewards of dependency. Their acceptance of the Spartans’ apparently higher human merit and their closer connections to the divine realm made dependency part of what seemed to be the natural order. Most elite perioikoi were highly identified with this order and with the Lakedaimonian state and its ideals, and it is likely that their identification continued well beyond the end of the Lakedaimonian hegemony of Greece.<sup>230</sup> This ‘elite harmonization’ was

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<sup>230</sup> Thomas Figueira recently plausibly proposed that the Lakedaimonian historiographer and author Sosobios was ‘of well-to-do perioeic lineage’ on the grounds of his epithet, *Λάκων*, *Lakōn*. Sosibios flourished in the first half of the third century, and even though only fragments of his works have been preserved, we know that he wrote

doubtless one reason for the remarkable stability of the Lakedaimonian state.<sup>231</sup>

I argued above that Sparta was also dependent on the perioikic communities collectively. This dependency is illustrated by its progressive loss of dominance within the Peloponnese – Sparta’s traditional ‘back yard’ – between the fourth and the early second centuries,<sup>232</sup> which arguably mirrored the progressive reduction of perioikic territory. While the most crippling loss was unquestionably that of Messenia in 370, which deprived the Spartans of half their fertile land and its Helot workforce – as well as most of the Messenian perioikic poleis<sup>233</sup> –, there were subsequent reductions in 338 and again in the mid- and late third century.<sup>234</sup> Even this reduced state of Lakedaimon continued to be a regional force to be reckoned with: though its attempts to re-establish dominance were ultimately unsuccessful, it came very close at times.<sup>235</sup> Not until the victorious Romans under Titus Quinctius Flamininus in 195 finally detached and ‘liberated’ the remaining perioikic communities on the coast (including Sparta’s port of Gytheion) and formed them into a federation of their own (later programmatically known as the League of

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extensively about Lakedaimonian poetry, cults, mythology and history. Figueira posited that these texts testify to ‘the survival of a patriotic and conservative cultural milieu outside of Sparta itself, one that remembered Laconian traditions well.’ Thomas Figueira, “*Politeia and Lakōnika* in Spartan Historiography,” in *Myth, Text, and History at Sparta*, ed. Thomas Figueira (Piscataway: Gorgias, 2016): 7–104, 69.

<sup>231</sup> ‘Elite harmonization’: Galtung, “A Structural Theory of Imperialism”: 113. The collusion of the dependent in their own asymmetrical dependency was also described by the BCDSS scholars: ‘Actor B might also have a conscious interest in maintaining the relationship, as it may provide them with more social and physical security compared to other social positions,’ Winnebeck et al., “The Analytical Concept of Asymmetrical Dependency”: 18.

<sup>232</sup> Many factors of course played a part in this development, which was by no means linear: at times the Spartans resurged into power, as we saw in the case of the harmost imposed on the island of Kythera as late as the third century; see above pp. 50–53.

<sup>233</sup> Interestingly, Thouria, shorn of its pro-Messenian and/or anti-Lakedaimonian element, remained Lakedaimonian, despite its location on the western side of the Taygetos mountain range.

<sup>234</sup> For details see Shipley, “The Extent of Spartan Territory”: 381–83 and Kralli, *The Hellenistic Peloponnese*: 64 and 250–51.

<sup>235</sup> Kralli, *The Hellenistic Peloponnese*: 238–44; Shipley, *The Early Hellenistic Peloponnese*: 86.

Eleutherolakones, i.e. of the Free Lakonians<sup>236</sup>) did Sparta finally sink into obscurity as a political and military power. Ioanna Kralli rightly observed that ‘each reduction, from the loss of Messenia in 370 to the erosion of Laconia by the Romans, marks a fear that Sparta would indeed continue to threaten.’<sup>237</sup> What enabled Sparta to threaten was not (or not only) its possession of territory, but also the availability of ‘the other Lakedaimonians’, who lived in that territory and contributed economically, militarily and in other ways, to the success of the Lakedaimonian state. For the Lakedaimonian elites in the perioikic poleis and in Sparta, this relationship, albeit asymmetrical, was in many ways symbiotic, and as such a ‘strong or enduring [...] form of dependency.’<sup>238</sup>

Only under extraordinary circumstances could and would members of perioikic elites even imagine wishing to break away from the Lakedaimonian state. I posited the existence of three factors which, combined, made such an attempt at secession or revolt a feasible option. These were (1) a significant weakening of the central power, Sparta; (2) protection and (military) support from another power against Sparta; and (3) the availability of an alternative ethnic (or constructed-as-ethnic) identity with a greater claim to loyalty.

These factors were present, albeit to different degrees, in all three case studies of poleis that did revolt or secede.

(1) Perioikic citizens from the Messenian poleis Thouria and Aithaia joined the Helots’ revolt at a time when Sparta was weakened after the great earthquake, and much of its fighting power was tied up in the lengthy siege of Mount Ithome. When the Kytherians – under Athenian pressure – joined the Delian League, Sparta had on both occasions previously suffered a severe setback (the capture of three hundred Lakedaimonian hoplites in 425, and the defeat in the battle of Knidos in 393). The secession of several perioikic poleis in north-western Laconia in 371/0 happened in the aftermath of the defeat at Leuktra and during a large-scale invasion.

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<sup>236</sup> Shipley, “The Extent of Spartan Territory”: 368.

<sup>237</sup> Kralli, *The Hellenistic Peloponnese*: 496.

<sup>238</sup> Winnebeck et al., “The Analytical Concept of Asymmetrical Dependency”: 7.

(2) The rebels of the Great Revolt had Athenian support, which included the offer of resettlement at Naupaktos and protection from possible reprisals. By joining Athens' Delian League, the Kytherians likewise could at least hope for Athenian (and in 393 Persian) naval protection. However, Kythera's disloyalty occurred under pressure. I argued that a pro-Athenian and/or pro-democratic faction of Kytherians in both cases probably added a voluntary element.<sup>239</sup> In 371/0, military support came from the new hegemon of central Greece, Thebes, and the Arkadians; although this only applied to independent Messenia and the Skiritai who physically removed to the new Arkadian state of Megalopolis. Karyai had no protection, and suffered.

(3) Their Messenian identity may well have played a decisive role in the decision of the citizens of Thouria and Aithaia to join the rebel Helots, but we do not know this for sure. I argued that other Messenian perioikoi loyal to Sparta may have pointed a finger of blame at those two communities because of the latter's geographical proximity to the fighting, and because they lacked origin stories that enabled them to claim roots elsewhere. The Messenicity of the Aithaians and Thourians may be only an invented motivation constructed after the fact – or it may have been a genuine reason. We cannot say for certain. I argued that in the case of Kythera, the island's geographically separate location off the mainland, its pre-Lakedaimonian history, and the fact that it probably was an independent polity later in the fourth century, combine to create at least the availability of a separate identity on which a (possibly pro-democratic) faction of Kytherians may have drawn. The poleis whose citizens seceded in 371/0 made use of their (remembered or invented) non-Lakedaimonian antecedents to enable them to join Arkadian communities.

Our sources remain largely silent about Spartan reactions, which are difficult to gauge. I argued that in the cases of the Messenian poleis of Thouria and Aithaia and the first secession of Kythera, the Spartans

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<sup>239</sup> The same may have been the case in Thouria and Aithaia during the Great Revolt; and in the polis of Sellasia, which joined the Boiotian-Arkadian invaders of 370 until its reconquest by Sparta five years later; although it is unclear to what extent this happened under (and due to) coercion.



decided to overlook what had happened for reasons of expediency, because they needed the manpower and expertise of the former rebels. After Kythera's second secession in 393, the status of the island's citizens may have been temporarily downgraded to that of inhabitants of conquered enemy territory, although this is conjecture. After the Theban-Arkadian invasions of 371/0, a Lakedaimonian army visited a harsh collective punishment on the Karyans. The reason for this was presumably their proactive role in helping the invaders, as well as the fact that other rebels (such as the inhabitants of the Skiritis) were beyond Lakedaimonian reach: the Karyans were made an example of. I argued that the unusual brutality of the punishment served additionally to bind all who took part in it – Spartans and perioikoi alike – into (renewed) commitment to the Lakedaimonian state.

The three case studies I looked at were exceptional. Most of the time, most elite perioikoi did not experience discontent – or if they did, it could not be expressed. Dependency brought rewards, while revolt was potentially costly, risking not only their loss but also reprisals. The small size and the scattered location of the perioikic poleis meant that escape from their political dependency on Sparta was impossible to attain: the best they could hope for was a better sort of dependency elsewhere.

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The ancient state of the Lakedaimonians was composed of Spartiates – citizens of Sparta with full citizenship rights – and the so-called perioikoi (literally: ‘those who dwell around’), who lived in small, self-governing towns around Sparta. The perioikoi were personally free but lacked the ability to autonomously decide matters of foreign or military policy. Spartiates and (elite) perioikoi were fellow, if unequal, citizens: they fought side by side, worshipped the same gods and upheld the same conservative values. To the outside Greek world, all alike shared in the legendary military glory of Lakedaimon, but inside their home state, the perioikoi were second-class citizens. Even so, only very few perioikic poleis attempted to shake off Spartiate overlordship during their centuries of shared history. This essay seeks to determine the costs and the rewards of unfreedom, and to answer the question of why some poleis chose the risky course of revolt when so many did not.

## THE AUTHOR

Imogen Herrad has lived in Berlin, London, Buenos Aires and Cardiff as a freelance broadcaster, writer and translator. Her programmes for German public radio include pieces about the Antichrist, medieval women writers, Zora Neale Hurston, and the cultural histories of sheep, dragons and the apple, respectively. Her short stories and articles have been published in magazines and anthologies in Wales, Canada and the US. She has published a collection of short stories, *The Woman who loved an Octopus and other Saints' Tales* (Seren Books, 2007) and a travel narrative, *Beyond the Pampas: In Search of Patagonia* (Seren Books, 2012), and, together with Lennart Gilhaus, Michael Meurer and Anja Pfeiffer, co-edited the volume *Transgression in der Antiken Welt* (Springer, 2020). She currently works as translator and language editor at the BCDSS, and is writing a PhD thesis about disobedience in ancient Sparta.